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The Shipibo-Conibo: Culture and Collections in Context

Editors,

Alaka Wali

J. Claire Odland



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Editors

Alaka Wali and J. Claire Odland

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

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The anthropology collections of the Field Museum include a strong representation of nearly 600 Shipibo-Conibo artifacts spanning a time frame from the earliest days of the Museum in 1893 to 2016. This includes not only textile and ceramic artifacts but also items of daily use and ceremonial objects. The collection was made by many different curators and collectors but all together provides a coherent source for research and study. The objective of this volume, *The Shipibo-Conibo: Culture and Collections in Context*, is to document this significant collection that hitherto has not received recognition or visibility. It represents a joint effort of seven authors, three Peruvians and four Americans, offering multiple perspectives on Shipibo-Conibo social and material culture, archaeology, history, and arts.

The volume comes at a time when studies of material culture, art, and museum practice are flourishing with vigorous debates across multiple fields. The renewed attention to material culture in social anthropology and cultural studies was sparked by emerging trends in archaeology during the late 1970s and 1980s (Buchli, 2002: 9–12). The study of “things” (Appadurai, 1986) became more main stream but focused especially on commodities and associated social processes of commodification, exchange, and valuation rather than on the processes of production, symbolism, and design aesthetics. Still, anthropologists became more attuned to these concerns as they turned their attention to the anthropology of art. Alfred Gell’s writings have been highly influential in this arena. He suggested that an anthropology of art should focus on the *relationships* between objects and people rather than on comparative aesthetics. In other words, he advocated that art objects should be viewed as agentive—entering into the world of social relations as not merely communication vehicles but also as actors, intentionally designed by their creators to act on the feelings and behaviors of others (Gell, 1998; see also Küchler, 2002: 58–59). Gell’s work stimulated considerable further theorization on material agency and the nature of art practice (for a summary, see Clarke, 2014). The focus on the production of art has led also to the significance of analyzing the contexts in which art making occurs. This is especially important for museum practice associated with collecting. As Lawrence Zúñiga points out, “To inform collection practices, it behooves us as ethnographers to understand and interpret contexts—the larger webs of relations—in which agency is recognized, cultivated and even promoted” (Lawrence Zúñiga, 2014: 28). This volume will contribute to the discussion on these interrelated themes by discussing the ways in which art and artifacts are produced as a product of the relationship between Shipibo-Conibo communities of Peru and the Field Museum.

The impetus for focusing on the Shipibo was a recent collection-building effort that took place between 2007 and 2011, led by the volume’s coeditors, that added to Field Museum holdings collected over the years since 1893. Other

major collections of Shipibo-Conibo artifacts are held at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, where they are labeled “Chama.” AMNH has approximately 1800 ethnographic objects. Approximately half of these were collected by Dr. Harvey Bassler, a geologist with Standard Oil, tagged and acquired in 1934, and another one-third was acquired in 1957. The Peabody includes 118 Shipibo and 59 Conibo objects collected by Dr. William Farabee during a 1906–1909 expedition (Farabee, 1922). The Smithsonian has a small collection of 80 artifacts, labeled Shipibo-Conibo, not Chama.

The making of these collections was accompanied by early visual documentation. For example, Farabee made substantial photographic records that are housed at the AMNH. A German anthropologist, Gunther Tessmann, who worked with Harvey Bassler, made cartograms that diagrammed aspects of material culture (Tessmann, 1930). But the best visual documentation of Shipibo artifacts was made by anthropologist Harry Tschopik in the early 1950s. Tschopik first researched Bassler’s 1934 collection for the AMNH exhibit, “Men of the Montaña,” which opened in 1951. Subsequently, he undertook his own expedition to the Shipibo-Conibo homelands in 1953. At that time, he filmed hours of silent footage capturing details of everyday life, including the making of textiles and ceramics. Tschopik was writing on this material at the time of his death in 1956.

Tschopik’s film provides the earliest and most substantial visual documentation of the Shipibo-Conibo culture, and his work became a basis for many who followed him. The first part of his plan for a thorough study was carried out in 1956 in an AMNH expedition under Donald W. Lathrap of Harvard. Lathrap’s work still ranks as among the most significant archaeological studies of the Shipibo and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Other scholarly studies that followed are referenced in subsequent chapters in this volume, including those by Peter Roe (a student of Lathrap), T. P. Myers, Warren de Boer, James Lauriault, and Lucille Eakin.

The coeditor of this volume, Claire Odland, discovered Tschopik’s footage in the archives of the American Museum of Natural History, and it spurred us to produce a new documentary film, *Shipibo: La Película de Nuestra Memoria (Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories)*, completed in 2011 (Odland et. al., 2011). The film, continuing in the footsteps of Tschopik and other pioneering visual anthropologists, is an innovative accompaniment to the collection that directly incorporates the voices of the Shipibo as they reflect on their material culture within the overall context of social change they have witnessed in the past 50 years. It interlaces contemporary Shipibo commentary with the original silent footage made by Tschopik. It provides the opportunity to discuss new modes of understanding collections and connecting material culture studies to applied anthropology. The film has been widely shown in Peru and was

accepted into the online collection of the *Ethnographic Films Online*, distributed by Alexander Street Press to libraries and academic institutions worldwide. This volume provides a more detailed background for the film while it defines its relation to the Shipibo collections at the Field Museum.

The volume is divided into two parts. Part I situates Shipibo-Conibo material culture in a historic framework to demonstrate both the continuity and the change that characterizes associated cultural practices and to describe a new direction in collection-building represented by the effort of 2007–2011. Part II provides an in-depth and comparative analysis of the textiles and ceramics that make up the collection and a symbolic analysis of the meanings of Shipibo designs. First, however, in this introductory chapter, we provide an overview of the present-day cultural geography of the Shipibo peoples and a description of the overarching themes that are addressed in the subsequent chapters.

Demography, Settlement Patterns, and Livelihood

The Shipibo-Conibo people are among the most numerous and recognizable peoples of the Peruvian Amazon. Once two distinct population groups, they have intermarried and intertwined their languages and artistic traditions over the centuries, blurring their distinctions to the point that their differences are now nearly indistinguishable (Eakin et al., 1986), and therefore, in this volume, they may be referred to as Shipibo as well as Shipibo-Conibo. At least partly due to the challenges that their riverine lands presented to invaders, the Shipibo were able to maintain much of their traditional art, dress, and culture in spite of more than 300 years of sporadic missionizing and contact with mestizo and Western influences. Their population of approximately 35,000 is distributed in villages and hamlets along the banks and tropical floodplains of the Ucayali River, which joins the Marañón to form the Amazon, flowing north and east past Iquitos to the Atlantic Ocean (Fig. 1.1). Villages can range in size from as small as 100 inhabitants to as large as 1,500. The average size is around 200 to 250 people. The Shipibo customarily develop new settlements by fissioning—a common pattern throughout the Amazon. Some Shipibo have also migrated to urban centers and currently have settlements in Lima and in Iquitos and Pucallpa, major port cities for Peru's Amazon region. Young people are especially apt to leave their home communities and settle in urban centers, seeking to further their education or earn income. Urban Shipibo youth, however, also express a desire to retain their cultural identity (Espinosa, 2012).

Shipibo residence patterns have changed as a result of gradual integration into Peruvian national society but also retain continuities documented in the historical records. There is still a favored matrilineal residence pattern, although we mostly encountered nucleated households and mixed patrilineal/matrilocal forms of residence (see also Roe, 1980: 49–50). Women maintain kin networks, sharing resources and working together in the production of handicrafts. Men also largely work with kin (cognates and affines) to maintain cultivated plots or hunt and fish.

Houses in Shipibo villages are still usually built of locally available materials: wood, bamboo, or palm and split bamboo tied together with vine or rope, set on stilts, and thatched with

palm fronds. They are widely spaced, arranged in long rows parallel to the riverbank, with an open area between the rows where children play. The house may be open air or partially enclosed, with storage in the rafters or hanging from them. The jungle is kept back from the houses, and the bare earth is swept clean by rain. Electricity may be provided for community events by gasoline-powered generators, but work is done during daylight hours, and the village is quiet after dark. Women work on their textiles on porches or outdoors year-round, but ceramic production is limited to the driest weeks of the year.

Village life is characterized by patterns common throughout Amazonia: families tend to their plots of land (to which they have use rights) or engage in other subsistence activities, such as hunting, fishing, and foraging; women devote time to making handicrafts late in the afternoon and early evening; and collective work parties (called *mingas* using the Quechua word) are organized on an as-needed basis (to build a house or clear a field) or for regular communal work, such as cleaning the village green. Village political structure conforms to the national norm instituted in the 1970s when Peru passed legislation governing the titling of indigenous peoples' land in the Amazon (Wali, 2012). Generally, Amazonian villages elect a council with between six and eight officeholders (president, vice president, treasurer, judicial officer) and indigenous villages have an additional office of *apu* (also a Quechua word), or "chief," considered a traditional authority figure. Additionally, Shipibo communities are represented by indigenous political organizations that were formed in the 1970s as Amazonian indigenous peoples organized to exert their territorial rights during a multicountry push to expand economic activities into the Amazonian frontier (see Davis, 1977; Chirif, 2006).

The Shipibo language is one of the official languages of Peru, descended from Panoan-speaking peoples who lived in the northeastern part of Bolivia and southeastern Peru before 300 CE (Lathrap, 1970: 131; Myers, 1988: 60–64). Other peoples of this linguistic family, spread across parts of the Peruvian, Brazilian, and Bolivian Amazon, include the Cashinahua, Yaminahua, Sharanahua, Nahua, Isconahua, Matsés, Amapuac, Cacataibo, and the Cashibo, all of whom share a similar design tradition (Bertrand Rousseau, 1983; Erikson, 1996; Santos & Barclay, 1998; Calávia, 2006; Délage, 2006; Lagrou, 2007, 2011). Most men and young people today speak Spanish as a second language, but in the home villages, Shipibo is the dominant language and remains quite vital. Many communities have bilingual teachers in the schools.

The Shipibo who live in the traditional homelands continue to depend on a subsistence-oriented livelihood, cultivating small plots for staple crops such as plantain and yucca, harvesting fruits and other forest products, hunting, and fishing. The major sources of cash income are the sale of cultigens, participation in illegal logging activities, and episodic work in other extractive activities. In those villages closer to urban centers (such as Pucallpa), men migrate to work as wage laborers, and women go to sell handicrafts to tourists.

Artistic Practices

Today, as in times past, the people compare the river to the anaconda, called Ronin in the Shipibo language and Yacuma-

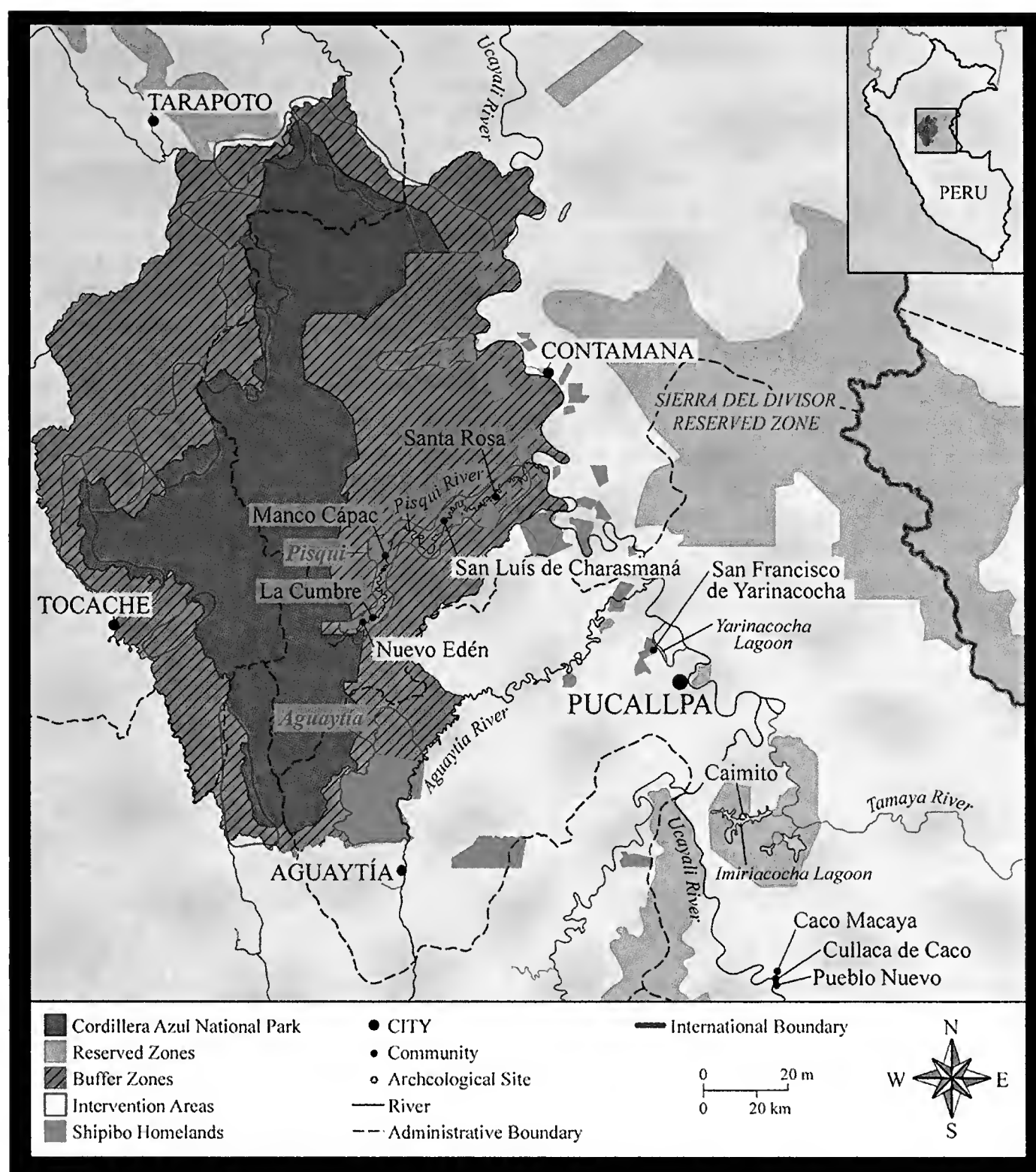


FIG. 1.1. Shipibo-Conibo communities: Regional map depicting communities and environs. Map by Jill Seagard, the Field Museum.

ma in the Quechua, whose skin they say contains all imaginable designs (Gebhart-Sayer, 1984: 10). The Great Serpent is an iconographic motif, repeated with infinite variations and applied to textiles, ceramics, ceremonial objects, beadwork, wooden clubs, utensils, and buildings. These design motifs are known as *kené* or *quené*, with *kenébo* as the plural but referred to in this volume simply as *kené*. *Kené* enwrap both bodies and objects and function as a “cosmovision,” a powerful way for people to identify themselves, remember their culture, and negotiate through both physical and spiritual worlds (see Belaunde, this volume, Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a: 144). Perú has designated *kené* as part of its cultural patrimony.

Organization of the Volume

Part I contains four chapters that review the research on the prehistory and history of the Shipibo and suggest new directions for making collections and providing context. In

Chapter 2, Ronald L. Weber, a student of Donald Lathrap, and Peruvian archaeologists Daniel Morales Chocano and Ana Mujica Baquerizo review archaeological research combined with a study of Shipibo mythology and historical data. They focus on the description of Cumancaya, the ancient site that may contain the earliest evidence of Shipibo-Conibo settlements, and the development of artistic traditions through the present day. This chapter places the original film and research by Harry Tschopik in the lineage of research on this culture. In Chapter 3, Alaka Wali documents the context of the most recent collection effort and the making of the new documentary using Tschopik’s film footage. She suggests that the collections can be thought of as “agents of engagement”—that is, as vehicles for long-term collaboration between the Museum and source communities because in this case the collection effort was part of a larger environmental conservation effort with Shipibo communities in the buffer zone of Cordillera Azul National Park. She describes the specific methodologies used to engage people and the impact on textile production and concludes with a discussion of how this different aspect of

collecting provides an avenue for transforming museum practice and for rethinking the value of collections for the future.

In Chapter 4, J. Claire Odland provides an in-depth discussion of the making of *Shipibo* and the ways in which it incorporates diverse viewpoints from Shipibo interlocutors. Odland discovered the raw silent footage from Tschopik's expedition in the archives of the AMNH and compiled it into a 50-minute documentary. We showed it in Shipibo villages along the Ucayali and Pisqui rivers in Pucallpa and in Lima, capturing commentaries on this footage from Shipibo men, women, and youth—elders, teachers, artists, and schoolchildren. In her chapter, Odland uses these comments to place contemporary life in historical context. By sharing their knowledge of their cultural practices as they view the 1950s film footage, Shipibo speakers enrich their lives and strengthen their pride and sense of indigenous identity. Odland weaves together their comments with quotations from Tschopik's diary, descriptions of his film, and pertinent historical references from the literature.

In the final chapter in Part I, Chapter 5, art historian Nancy G. Feldman examines Shipibo textile art and design in the greater national context of contemporary indigenous Peruvian arts by exploring the new, evolving communities of artists whose practices draw on indigenous traditions of community, patterning, and design. In this way, she provides a broader, comparative framework for understanding artistic production.

Part II of the volume focus more specifically on the material culture of the Shipibo and the meaning of their distinctive aesthetic traditions. In Chapter 6, J. Claire Odland and Ronald L. Weber provide a detailed description of the Shipibo-Conibo textiles in the Field Museum Collections. They present and illustrate definitive examples of Shipibo-Conibo textiles and discuss changes in fashions, makers, methods, and materials of fabrication. In Chapter 7, anthropologist Luisa Elvira Belaunde posits *kené* as three-dimensional art, applied to objects and to the human body in dress, body paint, and ritual movement. Belaunde explains how *kené* is seen and made in terms of its structure, composition, fabrication, cosmology, and meaning. The volume's conclusion, Chapter 8, provides some thoughts on the contribution of this volume to understanding Shipibo material culture and especially the role of the 2011 documentary.

Two appendices are included in the volume: Appendix I is a table compiled by Regenstein collections manager Christopher J. Philipp, and Appendix II is a list of the participants and informants who worked on the making of the documentary film *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria*.

Overarching Themes

Each chapter in this volume provides a singular perspective on the Shipibo-Conibo and their material culture, but there are several interrelated themes that unify the volume: (1) the importance of place that is the homeland of the Shipibo to their lifeways and material culture, (2) the struggle for cultural identity, and (3) the relationship of belief or worldview (*cosmovisión* in Spanish) and material culture.

Throughout several of the chapters—especially Chapters 2, 3, and 7—the importance of the relationship between the homeland environment and lifeways and material production has been highlighted. Chapter 2 draws attention to the long depth of occupation on the Ucayali and its tributaries for the Shipibo-Conibo River. Although there has been migration up and down the river and out of this homeland, there has been a constant presence and continuity of cultural practice for more than 4,000 years. This *longue durée* is notable in the material culture. The earliest examples of ceramics inscribed with designs manifest patterns similar to those on contemporary crafts and represent a continuity of symbolic thought intimately tied to the role of the river and its environs in the belief systems of the Shipibo. As Belaunde states in Chapter 7, the geometric designs are polysemic and include symbolic reference to the rivers and pathways of the homeland. In a compelling scene in the 2011 documentary, Celestina Amasifuén, a well-recognized artisan from Manco Capac, explains the designs on a vessel she has just made, stating that they represent mountains, rivers, and trails. As Wali describes in Chapter 3, these inscriptions of place on objects are reinforced through the daily experiences of subsistence livelihood that continues to characterize most of the Shipibo economy. The cultivating of garden plots, the harvesting of forest products, fishing and hunting, and the collecting of soils for clay and bark and berries for dye bring men, women, and children into daily contact with the forest and river building the “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1977) that shapes their interaction with nature in their home place. The mutual reinforcement of place and inscribed objects creates the conditions that, as Wali contends, allow environmental conservation efforts to succeed.

The second theme, the struggle to maintain identity, is reflected in all the chapters but is especially salient in Odland's description of the documentary film project in Chapter 4. As Shipibo men, women, and youth comment on the silent footage from the 1950s, we hear their deep nostalgia for their way of life, their customs, and practices that they perceive as being lost to them. Viewing the 1950s footage, they marvel at the size and abundance of fish and the way that cotton is spun and ceramic vessels are made. They express their anxiety at the relinquishing of their dress in favor of Peruvian modes of fashion—girls wearing shorts instead of the traditional embroidered *chitonte* skirt and boys wearing shirts and pants instead of *cushmas* (long tunics seen throughout Tschopik's footage). Yet, despite the perception of cultural loss, the 2011 film demonstrates that the Shipibo have continued practices that characterize sources for a distinct cultural identity. This is especially true in the Pisqui River region, the site of the major collection-building from 2007 to 2011. Here, women still make ceramics, fish are still plentiful, and canoes are crafted.

We are reminded of the continuity of some of these practices through the prehistorical and historical evidence discussed in Chapter 2. The discovery of the flattened skulls and a ritual knife at the El Zapotal site excavated by Daniel Morales and Ana Mújica resonates with the scenes from the documentary *Shipibo*, where people comment on seeing the scenes from Tschopik's silent footage of the 1950s: a man using the knife as part of a ritual fight and women reshaping the heads of babies. People commented that these practices (ritual fights and head shaping) were no longer done, but people knew of them, and a few elders remembered seeing the fights in their youth. One

woman mentioned that her mother had shaped her head. Indeed, during our own trips to the Pisqui, we were sometimes shown ritual knives that older men still had in their possession. Furthermore, even youth who live closer to major Peruvian urban centers, such as Pucallpa, express a determination to maintain their language and revitalize their knowledge of their cultural practices.

Chapter 5 puts the Shipibo efforts for retention of identity within a broader national context and demonstrates the central role that artistic production plays in community building and cultural identity formation for indigenous peoples, even in urban centers. Here, Feldman points out, new networks of artists are forming, and new forms of art are emerging, building on older traditions. The vibrancy of artistic practices belies the often-heard trope (one that the Shipibo and other indigenous peoples themselves buy into) that indigenous peoples are “losing” identity and forgetting cultural practices. Rather, as the chapters reflect, there is a constant tension between processes of change and the continuity of cultural practices. From the earliest evidence of Shipibo cultural formation, as Weber, Morales, and Mujica point out in Chapter 2, interaction with other Amazonian people (both Panoan and Tupian speaking) shaped the design of objects, modes of livelihood, and settlement patterns. Spanish colonization and nation building caused major upheaval but did not ultimately disrupt the links between the Shipibo and their homelands. As Wali points out in Chapter 3, Shipibo communities in the Pisqui region have accommodated by incorporating new modalities of livelihood, whether through relationships with loggers and merchants or through seeking urban occupations, with ongoing subsistence practices that remain vital to survival. Navigating this ever-shifting terrain should be viewed not in terms of loss of culture but as a dynamic process of constant disassembling and reassembling of knowledge repertoires within groups and between them. As Rodney Harrison points out in discussing a new concept of “indigeneity,”

Thus the transformation of one aspect of culture, for example, language, does not cause the ‘death’ of the ‘culture-as organism’ but instead is seen as a moment of reassembling or remaking. This means that the question of authenticity is removed and cultural invention is rearticulated as cultural persistence and continuity (Harrison, 2013: 11).

This tension between change and continuity is clearly demonstrated in the material culture of the Shipibo and its relation to belief, the third theme this volume addresses. As discussed by Odland and Weber in Chapter 6, the ceramics and textiles from the early 20th century on reflect choices in material (types of cotton, dyes, and threads for the textiles), design styles, and patterns of use (men no longer wear everyday *cushmas*, and women use aluminum or steel pots instead of ceramic ones). However, there remains a strong connection between belief, or *cosmovisión*, and material objects exemplified by the ongoing persistence of *kené* as a design aesthetic. As Belaunde discusses, *kené* is more than just a geometric pattern. It is the embodied manifestation of an enduring worldview that inextricably ties the Shipibo-Conibo to their homeland. The Cosmic Serpent, the great river, the pathways through forests, and the plants that enable visions and dreams live on both through their physical manifestation and through symbolic representation. Material culture production thus is inextricably tied to Shipibo beliefs about their place in the world. This volume testifies to the enduring interrelated processes through which the Shipibo produce knowledge, material culture, and the place they call their homeland. The volume, by centering on the Field Museum Collection and how it can be contextualized through ethnographic, archaeological, and archival research integrated with Shipibo perspectives in their own voice, provides a testament to the vitality of building collections and the deep insights they can reveal about fundamental aspects of social life.

PART I:

**HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS
FOR UNDERSTANDING
SHIPIBO MATERIAL CULTURE**

CHAPTER 2: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE AMONG THE SHIPIBO-CONIBO: PREHISTORY TO MODERNITY

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Translated by Sara Welsh Colaianni.

Abstract

In this chapter on the history and prehistory of Shipibo material culture, the authors demonstrate the *longue durée* of Shipibo design styles and their relationship to cultural practices. Ronald L. Weber, a student of Donald Lathrap, and Peruvian archaeologists Daniel Morales Chocano and Ana Mujica Baquerizo present recent archaeological research combined with a study of Shipibo mythology and historical data. They focus on the description of Cumancaya, the ancient site that may contain the earliest evidence of their settlements, and provide solid groundwork for understanding the development of indigenous artistic traditions in relation to place.

Resumen

En este capítulo sobre la historia y prehistoria de la cultura material shipibo, los autores demuestran la *longue durée* de los estilos diseñados por los shipibo y su relación con las prácticas culturales. Un estudiante de Donald Lathrap, Ronald L. Weber, y los arqueólogos peruanos Daniel Morales Chocano y Ana Mujica Baquerizo presentan su más reciente investigación arqueológica, combinada con el estudio de la mitología shipibo y datos históricos. El estudio se enfoca en la descripción del antiguo lugar de Cumancaya, que podría albergar la evidencia más antigua de sus poblados y también provee de una base sólida que nos permite entender las tradiciones artísticas indígenas y su relación con el lugar.

This chapter provides a historical context for understanding the importance of “place” and continuities and change in material production among the Shipibo-Conibo. Information in this chapter comes from archaeological research, ethnohistory, and ethnographic collaboration with a group of Shipibo living around Santa Clara and San Francisco de Yarínacocha and another group living on Imariacocha. José Roque Maynas, his wife Juana Cumapa Rengifo, and their extended family worked closely with Weber in all phases of this study, but his first ventures into the upper Amazon in 1969 were guided by Donald W. Lathrap, and Catalino Augustín Cumapa and his wife Casamira Santiago were his tutors. Many trips to the area have been made since, maintaining regular interaction with the inhabitants of Nuevo Chicago, part of Santa Clara adjacent to San Francisco de Yarínacocha. Research was carried out in Spanish, but Shipibo terms were collected as frequently as possible, checked, and compared with terms collected by Lorient, Lauriault, and Day (1993).

The coauthors on this chapter, Daniel Morales Chocano and Ana Mujica Baquerizo, have conducted archaeological research on the Shipibo since 2000. They excavated principally at the site of El Zapotal, located near the confluence of the Marañón and Ucayali rivers. The chapter begins with a discussion of the character of the Amazonian environment and how it has shaped Shipibo lifeways and beliefs, then discusses the archaeological evidence for their cultural development in this place, and finally

describes changes in material culture production from historical times to the present day.

Environment and Lifeways in the Amazon

The territory where the Shipibo reside is defined by the valley of the Ucayali River, which receives the waters shed by the most eastern Andean slopes and joins the Marañón above the town of Iquitos to become the Amazon or Solimões (Fig. 1.1). The Ucayali and all the tributaries that join the river from the west are whitewater rivers, carrying substantial sediments. The tributaries that join the Ucayali from the east also carry substantial sediments and can be classified as whitewater streams, but they appear to carry less alluvium and differ in mineral content. Alluvial soils deposited by the Ucayali are relatively rich, but in areas that are not annually flooded, the soil is less fertile. These older upland soils are not adequate to raise some crops, especially maize and plantains. For more than 4,000 years, peoples have been cultivating small gardens to raise staple crops (principally manioc) in these regions (both along the large rivers and inland near smaller tributaries). Over time, as nonindigenous peoples migrated into the region, more intensive exploitation of the resources has depleted primary forests. A major impact was the construction in 1943 of the Lima-Pucallpa highway (Ortiz, 1986: 169).

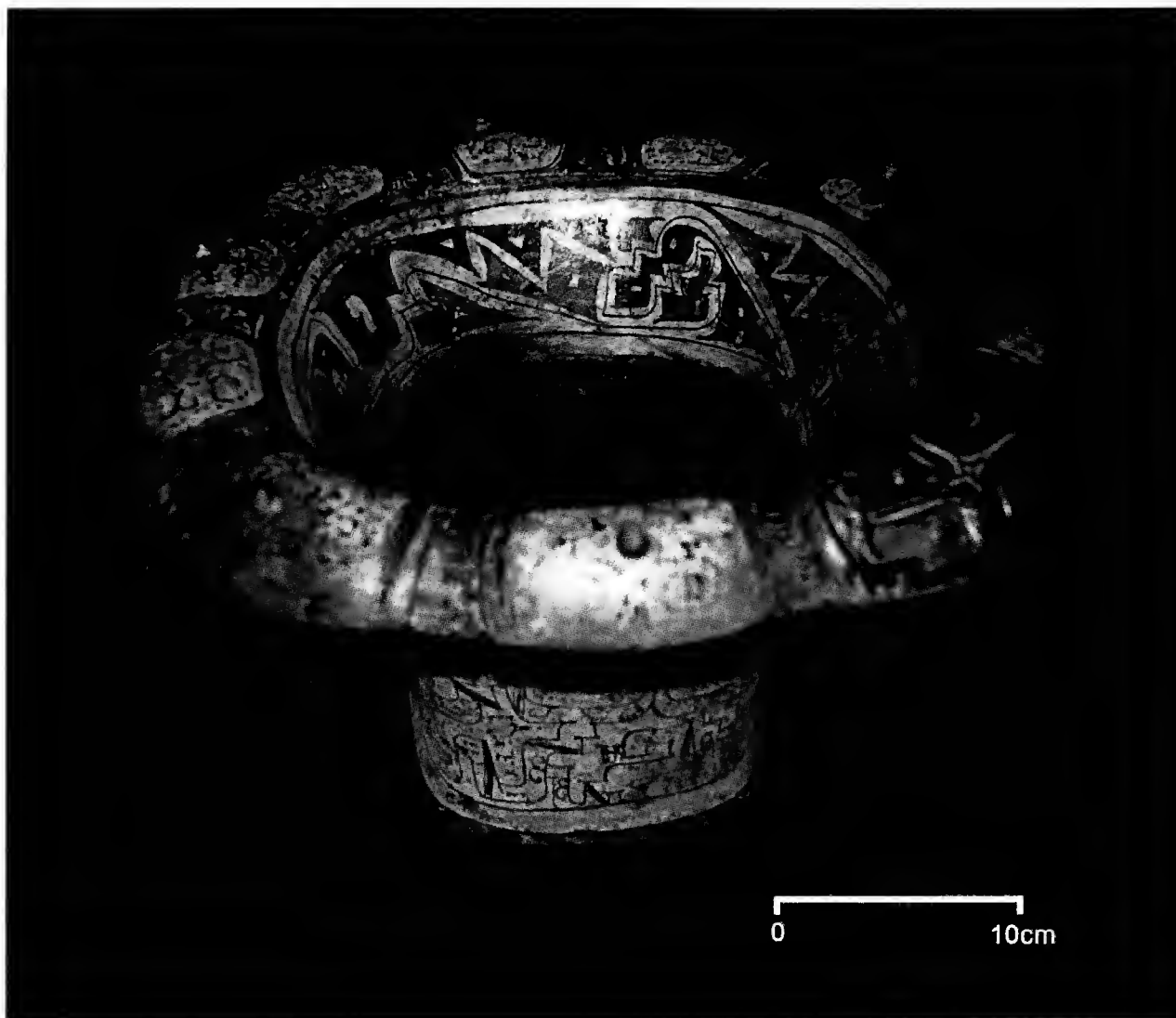


FIG. 2.1. Bell-shaped vase from the Napo River basin, with the figure of the great cosmic serpent called Ronin by the Shipibo-Conibo. Side view. Photo: D. Morales.

The Ucayali River typically meanders with regular S-shaped curves. Water moving more rapidly on the outside curve of meanders steadily cuts into the earth to leave a steep bank. More slowly moving water on the inside curve tends to deposit its load to form beaches. Segments of the river are often isolated as the river digs through adjoining banks. Resulting isolated oxbow lakes are an important habitat for fish and the Shipibo who hunt them. Yarinacocha is an example. Of equal importance are drowned river valleys dammed by natural levees that form more irregularly shaped dendritic lakes. Imariacocha is a composite lake consisting of an oxbow whose levees have dammed a dendritic river system. Both types of lakes are the color of tea and not very rich in nutrients during the dry season. However, when the level of the Ucayali River rises during the wet season, the lakes are flooded and become rich with river nutrients. The dendritic lakes are richer in fish resources because the amount of shoreline to water is greater and more land life and litter fall into the water to supply food for fish.

To understand the distribution and history of peoples on major rivers, such as the Ucayali, and archaeological evidence for cultural history of the Shipibo-Conibo (Lathrap, 1970), it is necessary to recognize that larger rivers generally contain more fish and that their shores have more fertile alluvial soil. Smaller tributary rivers that branch into the main stream tend to have fewer resources than the larger rivers formed by their junction. This greater abundance permits the support of a larger human population. When factors such as technology and social organization are equivalent, competition for these resources generally allows the larger downriver human population to pressure the slightly weaker upriver people. The tendency for

groups to shift up stream is inherent in this population differential. When a weakness occurs in the downriver population, perhaps caused by epidemics, the upriver population will often retake the positions of their downstream neighbors. When populations are pushed to the most upward area of small rivers, they will move off the rivers and occupy less rich interior environments.

Riverine populations tend to be lineal and promote ranking based on their position along the river to create a social hierarchy. Boats are the main form of transportation. Once displaced from the riverine environment, villages lack the natural alignment, and people frequently cluster into villages that are more egalitarian. Villages often take on a circular plan, and social hierarchy is diminished. The movement of interior populations is less restricted, and walking is the main mode of transportation. Trade for specialized products frequently occurs between interior and riverine peoples. When conflict between peoples living along the rivers in lineal-type settlement and interior-type settlement occurs, its results are unpredictable since interior people tended to compete with riverine people with guerilla-type warfare and river people with retaliatory raids. Epidemics were much more severe when they struck the large, open populations of riverine peoples. Smaller closed populations frequently were less severely infected.

These general circumstances are important factors in explaining the distribution of Amazonian peoples and cultures. During the past 4,000 years, riverine cultures tended to migrate up the Amazon and only occasionally shift back down. Amazonian societies, including the Shipibo, continue to maintain lifeways dependent on the rivers and lagoons of this basin from the time of their ancestors. They conduct their daily lives in this riverine

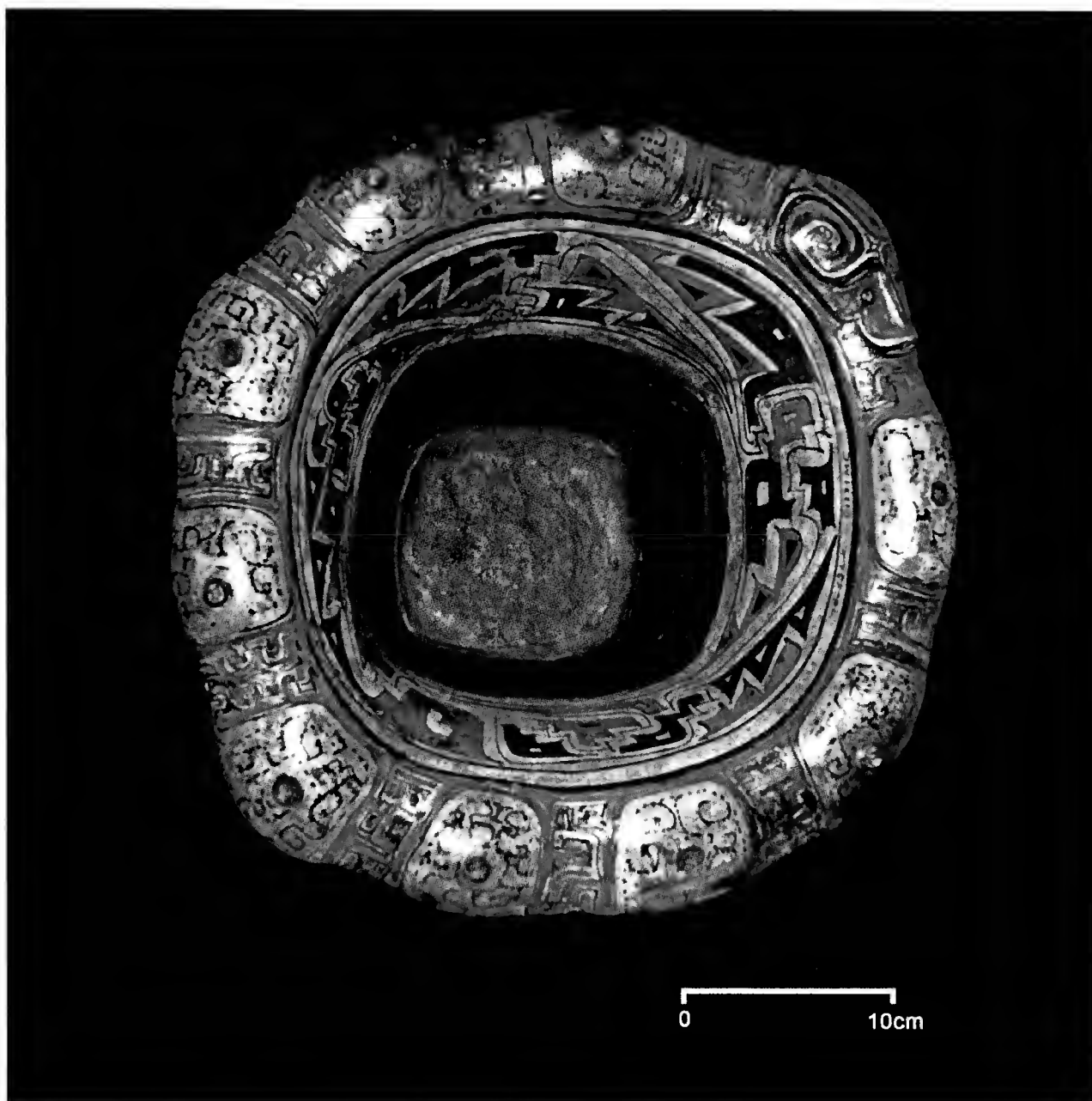


FIG. 2.2. Bell-shaped vase from the Napo River basin, with the figure of the great cosmic serpent called Ronin by the Shipibo-Conibo. Top view. Photo: D. Morales.

environment, where they create subsistence, traditions, customs, and ideology. Today as in times past, the river is compared to the great serpent, called Ronin in the Shipibo language and Yacumama in the Quechua language. Ronin, as Belaunde states later in this volume, is represented as an iconographic motif, geometric and schematic, in all the painted artifacts, such as ceramic ware; textiles; *macanas*, or clubs; and other ceremonial ornaments, such as the traditional *corona*, or crown.

In Shipibo-Conibo cosmovision, the river represents the great cosmic serpent, mistress of the universe and the source of all *kené* designs. The river is also compared to the sky where the stars pass in canoes and where strong currents flow and other worlds exist, as exemplified in Figures 2.1 and 2.2. Morales and Mujica's excavations in the Zapotal site and on the Napo River (Fig. 2.3) found archaeological evidence, such as this geometric serpent seen in a fragment of a plate from the Zapotal site (Fig. 2.4), and in a naturalist form in the bell-shaped contour of the vase from the Napo River (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).

In the Shipibo-Conibo iconography, there is also a great square cross, which represents the Southern Cross that dominates the center of the sky during the dry season and is the gateway through which the dead enter the other world (Fig. 2.5). This philosophy is similar to that represented in the great iconographic scenes of the Mochica culture that develops in the north of Peru during the period from 100 to 600 CE. Archaeologists call these scenes "the rebellion of the artifacts,"

in which men's weapons and tools come to life, rebel, and capture the warriors (Morales Chocano, 2002). Certainly, this belief of the Shipibo-Conibo and Shetebo people clearly reflects the great importance of the rain forest and water culture media or habitats in which they were born, emerged, and developed. This entire cosmovision is sufficient reason to assert that they have a notable philosophy and a way of life balancing earth, sky, and water in the Amazon environment. Thus, it cannot be said that they are of Andean origin; rather, they are clearly of Amazonian origin. In fact, they themselves explain their origins as a result of the dynamics of this great river in which they live.

Archaeological Evidence for Shipibo-Conibo Antecedents and Material Culture Production

The Shipibo are the descendants of Panoan-speaking peoples who lived in the northeastern part of Bolivia and southeastern Peru before 300 CE (Lathrap, 1970: 131; Myers, 1988: 60–64). The first cultural signs of these people in the Ucayali area appear as the Pacacocha Tradition at about 300 CE (Myers, 1974: 135). This cultural tradition is one of the major contributors to the sophisticated Cumancaya style dated to between 800 and 1000 CE. Cumancaya is characterized by a complex set of vessel forms with incised designs and postfired polychrome painting.

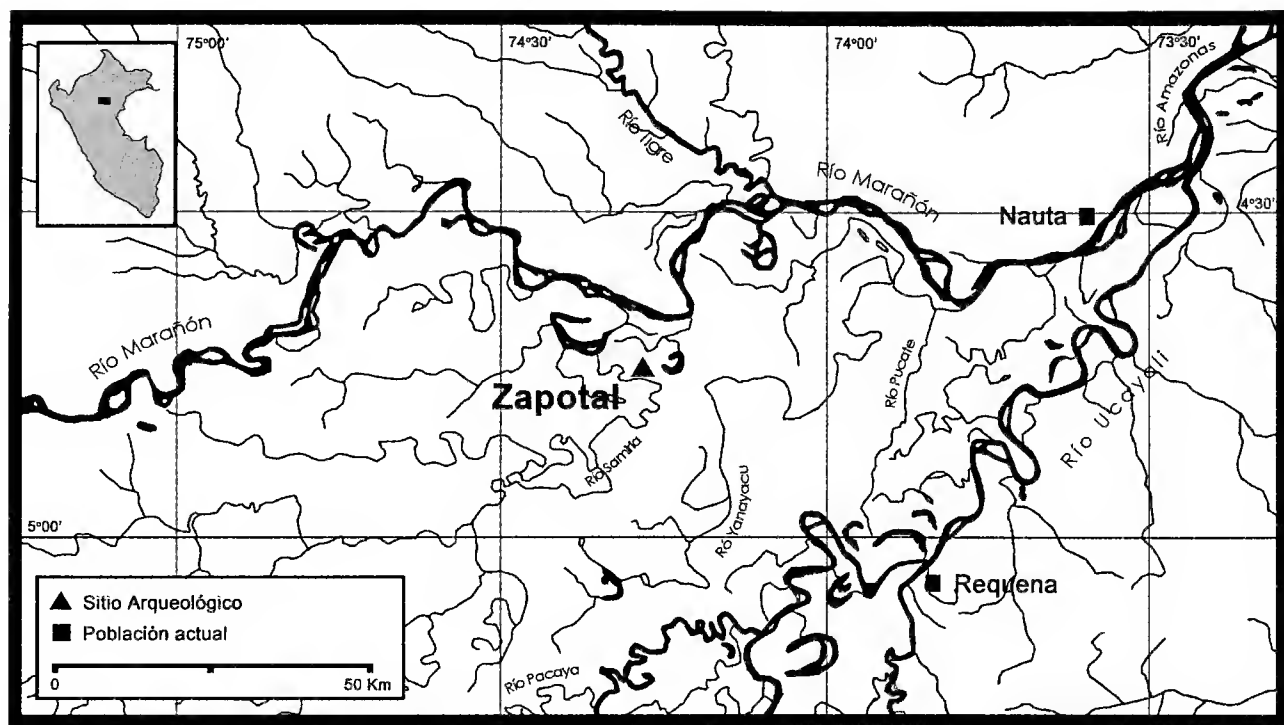


FIG. 2.3. Location map of the archaeological site of El Zapotal. Illustration: D. Morales.

Peter Roe (1973) demonstrated conclusively that Cumancaya is the antecedent culture to the ethnographic riverine Panoans.

Shipibo-Conibo mythology, as told to Lathrap (1970) and Carolyn Heath (cited in Alayza et al., 2002), also places the people's origin in the village of Cumancaya, where grew an enchanted tree whose leaves moved without wind. Its fruit burst open under an intense sun, dropping the seeds into the waters of the lake to be eaten by *gamitanas*, a now rare and highly prized Amazonian food fish. In a short while, the fish began to fly like birds. The people were amazed, saying that surely God had given them medicine to fly. They took the leaves of that tree, squeezed the juice, and sprinkled it all over the village. "We're going to fly," said the people, and they fell asleep. The next day,

when the people awoke, the village began to tilt and then took off into the air. It began to fly but did not arrive at the sky-world; instead, it fell spectacularly, and all the pottery broke into pieces. For this reason, local people do not touch the pottery shards found there, thinking that they are enchanted.

Cumancaya appears to be composed of two distinct ethnic contributors: the Pacacocha people and an elite class that is sometimes referred to as Inca (Lathrap et al., 1985, 1987). This elite group of traders from the eastern flank of the Andes may have spoken a Quechua language. Today, the Shipibo refer to an "Inca" in many of their origin myths. Another ancestral site is Canchahuaya on the lower Ucayali, where, similar to Cumancaya,



FIG. 2.4. Plate fragment from El Zapotal, showing a black background with head designs of the cosmic serpent Ronin in white color lines, resembling the Caimito style of Lathrap. Photo: D. Morales.



FIG. 2.5. Design of square cross *kené* on a Shipibo-Conibo pot. This cross is the gate of heaven, where the dead enter the afterlife. Photo: D. Morales.

there is an archaeological site with a quantity of ceramic remains, both sites partially inundated during periods of very high water.

In 2001, Morales and Mujica began research in the Reserva Nacional del Pacaya-Samiria, undertaking excavations at the El Zapotal site a few kilometers from the present-day town of San José del Samiria near the confluence of the Marañón and Ucayali rivers that form the Amazon (Fig. 2.4) (see also Morales Chocano, 2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2011; Mujica, 2002). At the El Zapotal site, Morales and Mujica found evidence of secondary burials in red-slipped ceramic pots. Associated with these, they found skulls with flattened foreheads and penis-shaped artifacts. The Tschopik film, as discussed by Odland, shows that the practice of flattening skulls existed in the 1950s. In the 2011 documentary, several people commented that they remembered the practice, and one woman said that her skull had been flattened. Morales and Mujica also discussed their findings with contemporary Shipibo villagers in the vicinity of El Zapotal and also were told that head flattening was familiar though no longer practiced. Their informants also recognized the penis-shaped artifacts and called them “*shibinantes*” and said they were used in puberty rituals. Although by themselves the presence of these artifacts in ancient sites and the ability of present-day Shipibo to recognize them do not constitute proof of continuities of cultural practice, they do warrant further research on the linkages between past cultures and current configurations.

This work has added more recent evidence of the antecedents of the Shipibo-Conibo in the wider context of other Panoan and non-Panoan peoples. However, much ambiguity remains in the

archaeological record about the migration and interaction patterns of these ancient cultures.

Around 1300 CE, a powerful group of Tupian speakers moved upriver and occupied parts of the middle Ucayali. Their most southern extension is represented at Imariacocha on the Tamaya River south of Pucallpa. The Caimito phase of the polychrome tradition is the archaeological remains of this intrusive Tupian group (Lathrap, 1970; Weber, 1975). The people who introduced the Caimito style came upriver from what are now Peru, Ecuador, and Brazil and were very closely related to the makers of the Napo and Miraconguera polychrome ceramics (Evans & Meggers, 1968). These pottery traditions are distinguished by relatively thick polychrome pottery incised with broad lines and painted in black and white slip paint. Anthropomorphic urns and vessels with square horizontal cross sections are characteristic of these traditions. A deeply incised square platter-like vessel in Figures 2.6 and 2.7 is decorated with mythical two headed serpents, a common motif.

It appears that with the collapse of the Tupian chiefdoms that occupied the upper Amazon, the Miraconguera, Napo, and Caimito traditions ended. The Caimito tradition ended by 1600 CE, and the Shipibo began to reoccupy the central Ucayali. Three funerary urns (Figs. 2.8–2.10) belong to distinctly different cultural groups, separated in space and time, but share the polychrome style of the central Amazon. The Caimito and Napo also shared the practice of secondary burials in urns, making them participants in the same cultural tradition that

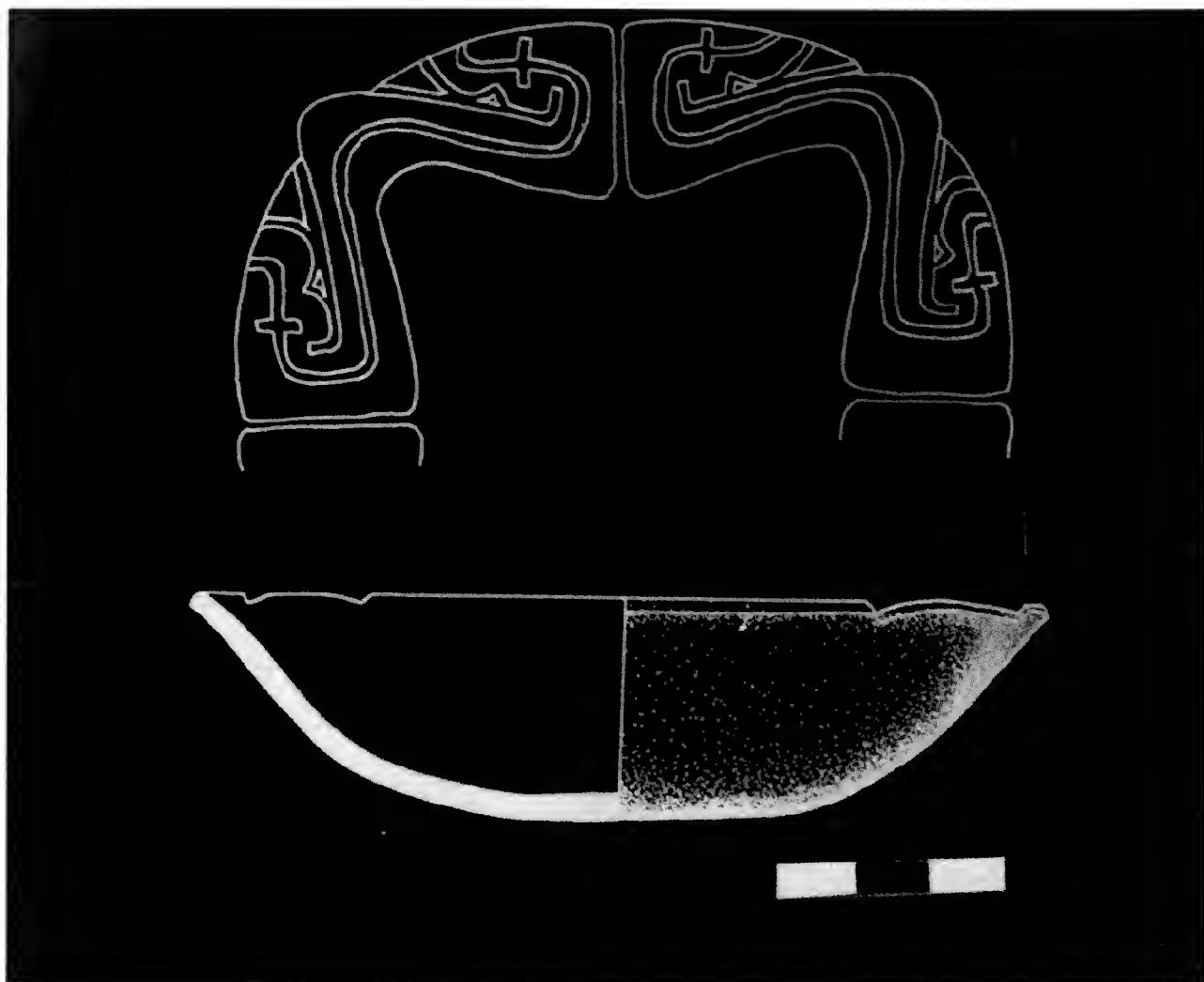


FIG. 2.6. Caimito square open plate with incised double-headed serpent design. Photo: R. L. Weber.

survived among the Shipibo-Conibo of the Ucayali until approximately 50 years ago.

Basket weaving has undoubtedly been practiced in the upper Amazon from earliest times, but no preserved basketry or textile fabrics have been identified in the archaeological record. Basketry impressions are found on the bottom of some late prehistoric Caimito phase vessels (1300–1500 CE). Large palm leaf-plaited patterns resembling the weave used to make sleeping mats and smaller plaiting that resembles the work on Conibo sewing baskets are indicated. Impressions of coiled or sewn rod work are also found. Gunther Tessmann's cartograms show the distribution of particular culture traits on a map of Peru. With these maps, Tessmann shows that sewn rod mats are associated with the riverine Panoans but not with the Tupians (Tessmann, 1930, Kartogramm 9). It is likely that basketry was practiced in the upper Amazon throughout the known ceramic periods dating back at least 4,000 years. Because of the perishability of these materials and the lack of ceramic impressions, no reliable evidence for basketry art has been found to predate Caimito.

The dating and prevalence of the spinning of cotton can be fairly well recognized by the archaeological occurrence of ceramic spindle whorls. If spindle whorls are rare, one can suspect that less fiber was spun. Abundant spindle whorls suggest greater use of fiber and textile manufacture. One spindle decorated in the Hupa-iya style (around 200 BCE) was found on the surface at San Francisco de Yarinahacocha, and conical spindles are quite common during the Cumancaya phase (800–1200 CE). Spindles of a square shape appear with great frequency during the Caimito phase, and there is little doubt that a great amount of cotton thread was being prepared by Caimito people at Imariacocha (Fig. 2.11).

Weber (1992) has proposed that the square spindle whorls, similar to the square plates mentioned above, have ritualistic and cosmological significance. The square forms show four double-headed dragon-like figures defined by broad incised lines around the edges. Square spindle whorls are often decorated with an abbreviated version of this design. These vessels and spindle whorls are most likely representations of an *axis mundi* and access to a multileveled cosmology. Oddly, there are no reports of any spindle whorls being found in either the Napo phase of Ecuador or the Miraconguera phase of Brazil. The Shipibo often use perishable wood or turtle bone spindles, and it is possible that such spindles were used by the people of these other polychrome phases. Nevertheless, the absence of spindle whorls in the other polychrome traditions is significant. Apparently, the spinning of cotton and large woven textiles was not as important to the Indians of the polychrome traditions of the Napo and Amazon rivers.

Change in Colonial and Postcolonial Times

The early Spanish explorers found culturally similar populations groups separated by large buffer zones, which suggest ongoing hostilities between them. The first Spanish to enter the upper Amazon were members of the Gonzalo Pizarro Expedition in 1540, when Orellana, one of Pizarro's captains, made the long voyage from the upper Amazon in the Andes to its mouth at the Pacific (Herrera, 1963). Juan Salinas de Loyola was first to enter the Ucayali in 1557–1558, traveling up the Ucayali to the juncture of the Tambo and Urubamba rivers (Myers, 1990: 7). No people were encountered for the first 100 leagues, or approximately 300 to 400 miles (Myers, 1974: 139).

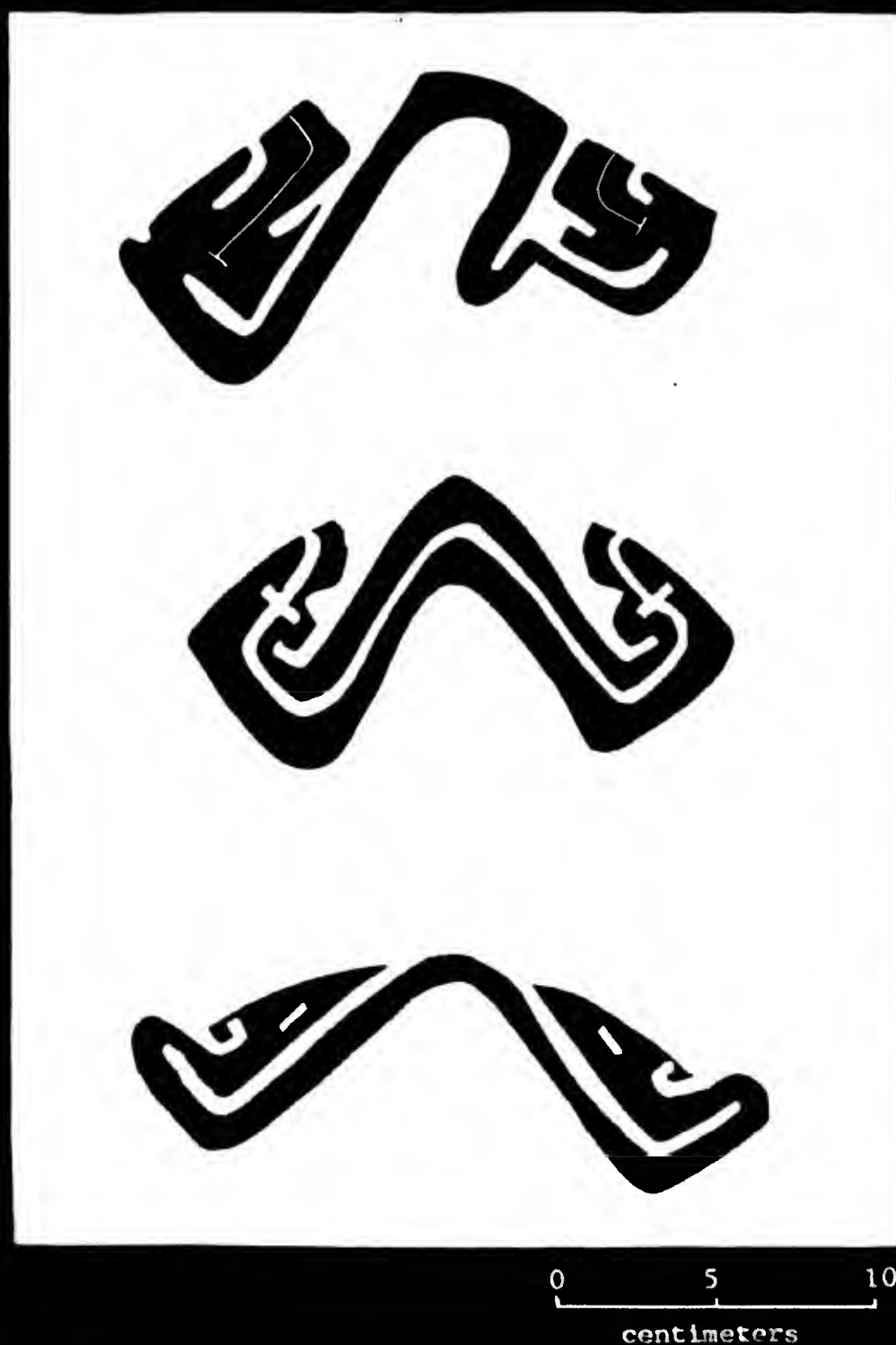


FIG. 2.7. Three Caimito serpent designs from interior of square plates. Photo: R. L. Weber.

This unoccupied area was either the result of an established buffer zone between the Omagua, Cocama, and Cocamilla or the lack of high grounds suitable for permanent occupation adjacent to the river. Salinas de Loyola found three principal groups identified by Myers as the Cocama, Conibo, and Piro and described large villages of up to 400 houses and a chiefdom-type society with inhabitants adorned in cotton fabrics and gold ornaments (Myers, 1974, 1990: 7). The Conibo were occupying the central Ucayali, while the Tupian-speaking Cocama occupied the lower river, and the Piro, an Arawakan-speaking people, were to the south on the upper Ucayali (Myers, 1974:

135–158, 1997: 124). The next recorded entrance into the Ucayali occurred in 1562, when an advance party from the Pedro de Ursua Expedition went to the “Cocama River.” The Cocama River is an old name for the Ucayali River, which was controlled largely by Cocama Indians. Juan de Vargas, the leader of this group, captured many men and women to serve as servants and brought back canoes filled with maize (Simon, 1971).

These early contacts in the late 16th century introduced epidemics and caused significant population shifts. Disease and slave raids from Brazil continued to stress the indigenous

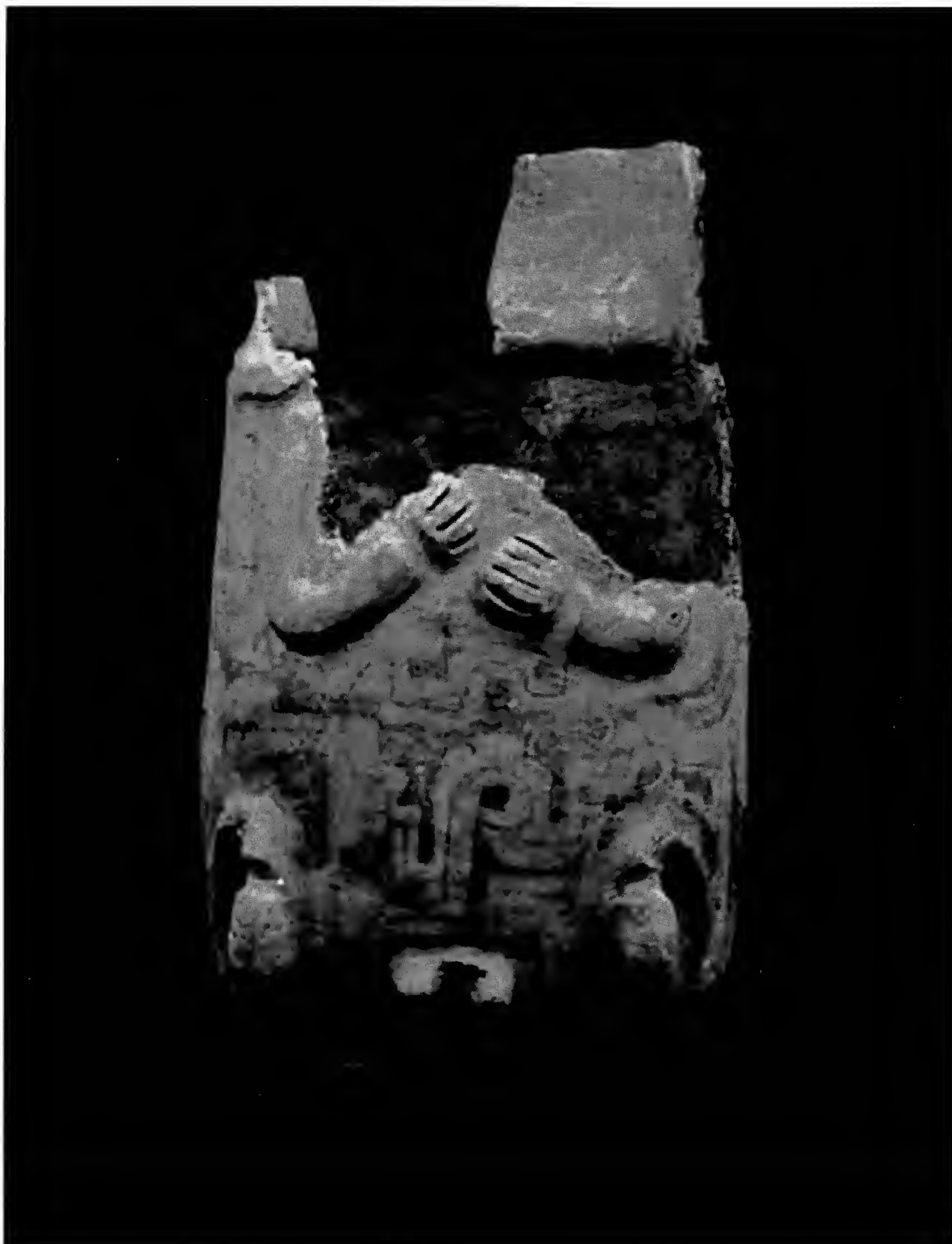


FIG. 2.8. Caimito-style funerary urn, after Lathrap. Photo: D. Morales.

population through the 17th and 18th centuries (Edmundson, 1922; Hemming, 1978). Steward and Metraux quote Izaguirre (1948: 303–304) and state that the Shipibo originally lived on the upper Aguaytía River (lat. 8°S, long. 75°W), from which they were driven in the 17th century by the Cashibo, an interior group who in turn had been pressed by the Campa, another interior group living on the Gran Pajonal. The Shipibo occupied the Aguaytía and Pisqui rivers at this early time and did not move on to the Ucayali until about 1820 (Myers, 1997: 125). The Shipibo themselves drove the Conibo from the region of the mouth of the Aguaytía River southward up the Ucayali River to the Pisqui. These population shifts probably actually began in the 16th century, when the Cocamilla, Cocama, and Omagua chiefdoms that occupied the lower Ucayali, and Marañón began to collapse under stress from epidemics and Portuguese slave raids. The collapse of the Tupian-speaking chiefdoms created a relative vacuum on the lower Ucayali

River. This area remained depopulated and served to insulate the Shipibos from the mid-17th-century turmoil (Myers, 1997: 124). The area was not occupied again until the mid-19th century.

Little is recorded about the inhabitants of the Ucayali for the next 100 years, but it appears that the chiefdoms dissolved to become more egalitarian, and the population declined. The first well-described contacts between the Shipibo and Spanish missionaries took place in the middle of the 17th century. Jesuits approached the Ucayali from the north, while Franciscans came from the south and west down the Pachitea River. Missions were established by both groups, but there were frequent rebellions against the religious and military domination. Massacres of the Spanish occurred in 1695 and 1698. In 1698, the Conibo united with the Shipibo and the Shetebo to repel a Spanish punitive force, and the Jesuits were driven out (Myers, 1990: 11). The Ucayali remained free of Spanish influence until 1757, when

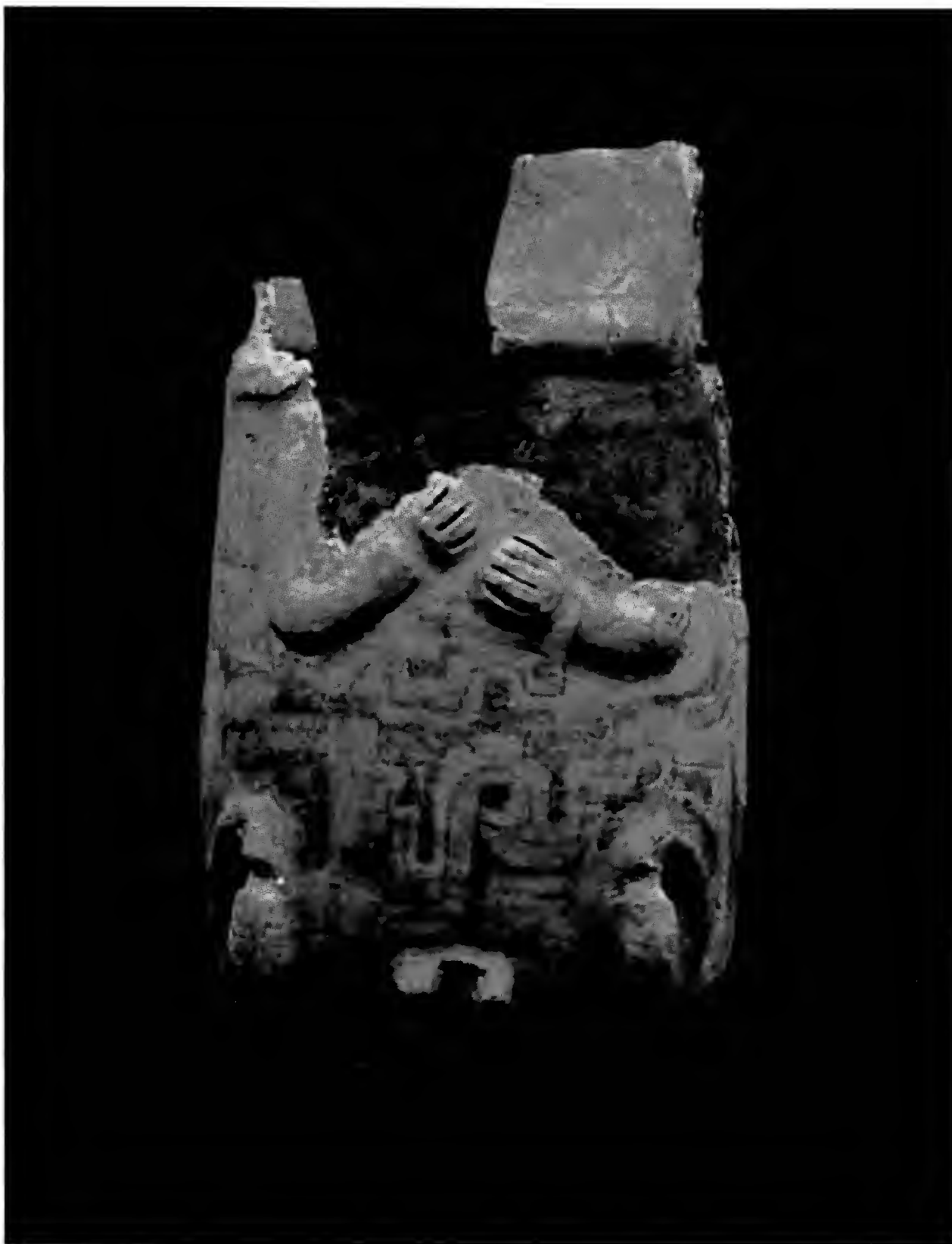


FIG. 2.9. Guarita-style funerary urn from the central Amazon. Photo: D. Morales.

Franciscan missionaries returned to the Ucayali by way of the Pampas de Sacramento to the Cashabatay River (Myers, 1990: 12). This second intrusion of Spanish was pushed back, but in 1760, they returned to establish missions among the Shetebo and later the Shipibo. By providing iron tools to the Panoans, these mission centers prospered, but the Indians revolted again in 1767, and missions were not reestablished until 1791 (Myers, 1974: 139).

Since 1791, the area has been under continual contact with missionaries and Spanish-speaking people. Beginning in the late 19th century, many male Shipibo worked as peons collecting rubber, timber, or other forest products. The rubber boom began in 1884, and exploitation continued to 1912 (Ortiz, 1984: 215). During this time, most adult Shipibo men were recruited by Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking patrons into indentured service. Most men adapted tailored clothing and became bilingual. Women remained in their traditional villages and did not acquire a second language.

Pre-Colombian Textile Traditions

In 1540, Carvajal, the chronicler for the Orellana expedition down the Amazon, reports that in the territory controlled by the Omagua chief Aparia the Great, Indians brought them cotton to caulk their newly constructed brigantine (Medina et al., 1934: 185). He also states that four Indians visited Orellana “decked out in gold and [splendid] attire.” These four emissaries stood out as being dressed differently from other Omagua, perhaps wearing the long painted *cushmas*, while the majority of Omaguas were not. Weber suggests that this is the period when cotton textile clothing was first introduced to the Omagua. The lack of spindle whorls in the Napo phase ceramic tradition, the archaeological traces of the Omagua, supports this conclusion. Farther downriver, good cotton cloth is again mentioned, but it is not clear that the cotton was clothing. Very good quality cotton goods were also seen at a locality on the

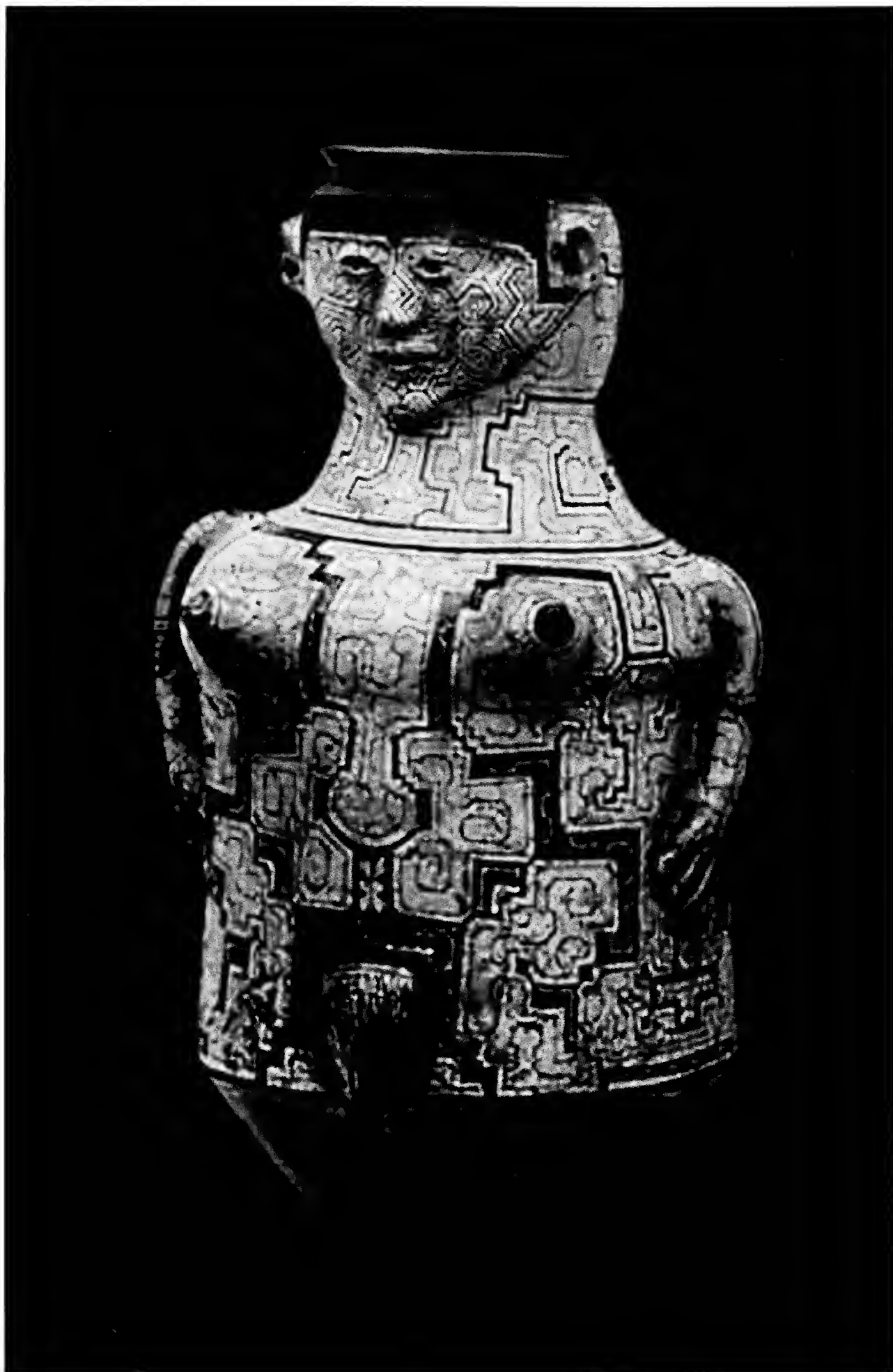


FIG. 2.10. Shipibo-Conibo funerary urn. This urn has stylistic and functional similarities with Caimito- and Guarita-style urns, demonstrating the historical continuity in burial customs and ceramic styles and patterns. Photo: D. Morales.

central Amazon. This sighting was probably below Manaus (Medina et al., 1934: 211). It is still farther down river that bark cloth was probably seen for the first time: “two mitres, very well made [and yet] with [only] natural skill, resembling those which bishops wear: they were [made out of] woven [goods] and we do not know out of what [material], because the stuff was neither cotton nor wool, and they were of many colors” (Medina et al., 1934: 212).

The Omagua, the descendants of the people who produced the Polychrome Napo culture of Ecuador, were surely wearing woven cotton garments by 1700. In the mid-18th century, Omagua men wore woven cotton shirts and pants, while women used loincloths and *pampanillas* or shawls (Maroni, 1988: 306). In the early 18th century, a contemporary of Samuel Fritz, the head Jesuit missionary on the upper Marañón, reported that “the men of the Great Omagua tribe that live in the Islands of

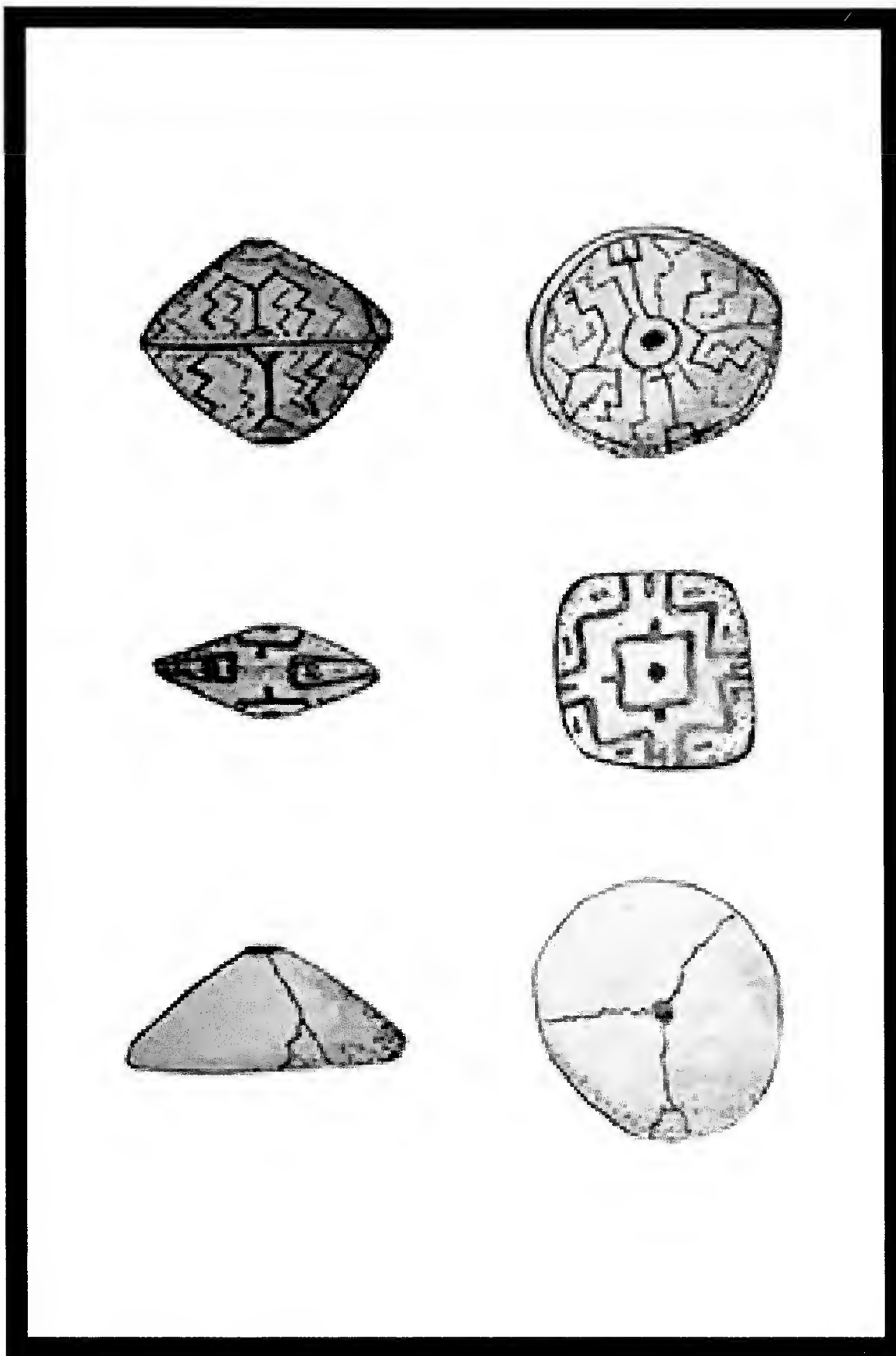


FIG. 2.11. Spindle whorls. (A) Shipibo biconical painted spindle whorl, 5 cm in diameter. (B) Caimito incised square hollow spindle whorl, 4.5 cm wide. (C) Cumancay conic spindle whorl, 5 cm in diameter. Illustration: R. L. Weber.

the Marañón wear today breeches and shirts of cotton, woven and colored with considerable artistry.” These shirts of cotton may be examples of *cushmas*. “The women content themselves with two pieces of the same kind, one of which serves them for a small apron, the other to form an indifferent covering for the breasts, painting the rest of the body even the hair with the juice, darker than mulberry, of a forest fruit that they call *Jaguá*” (Edmundson, 1922: 49–50). Using Maroni as a source, Metraux (1948: 694) states that the Cocama and Omagua wore “*cushmas*, woven of cotton and decorated with painted or woven geometrical designs in red, blue, yellow, orange and green” and that “women wore knee-length cotton skirts and sometimes a little mantle.” The knee-length skirt may be his translation of *pampanilla*. This description of women wearing

small apron-like clothing could be interpreted as skirts. However, it may pertain to a small apron-like garment like ones used by the tribes of the northwestern Amazon.

Tessmann (1930: 817, Kartogramm I) shows all the mainstream riverine groups, (Shipibo, Conibo, Piro, Omagua, and Cocama) as wearing woven cotton garments like ones used by the Shipibo today. It is possible that the Panoan groups introduced the use of the *cushma* and the tube skirt to the Tupian groups, first to the early Cocama-Caimito people, and later the Cocama introduced the style to the Omagua. The lack of archaeological examples of spindle whorls in the Napo component suggests that the Napo-Omagua people were spinning less thread and did not adapt the *cushma* fashion and tube skirt until the late 16th century. The Cumancaya

people probably introduced the style to the Caimito people, and the dress style spread down river. Shipibo traditionally credit the “Inca” with the introduction of weaving. “Inca stories” told by José Roque relate that the “Inca” wears a fine *cushma*. The designation of “Inca loom” for the typical back-strap loom used by the Shipibo today has historical validity. It is likely that the loom was introduced to the central Ucayali by the Cumancaya or one of its antecedents in the Pacacocha tradition. Large conical spindles of the Cumancaya phase are similar in form to smaller conical and biconical ones used today by the Shipibo. They are unlike Caimito square spindle whorls (Fig. 2.11).

Today, Shipibo men dress most often in Western clothing, but some older men still wear the *cushma* or *tari* in the evening and on ceremonial occasions (Fig. 2.3). Older women generally wear a tube skirt (*chitonte*) and a blouse (*coton*) made of brightly colored commercial cotton or synthetic fiber, as Odland and Weber discuss in this volume. Older photographs of Shipibo women show them wearing a skirt and a piece of cotton cloth over both shoulders like a shawl. One photograph, believed taken on the Ucayali in 1871, shows a man labeled “Conibo” wearing an unpainted *tari* and his daughter wearing a feathered skirt (Akazawa et al., 1992: 192). The unpainted *cushma* and beaded bandolier seen in the photograph are reminiscent of the Campa style, but the headdress is similar to one illustrated by Farabee (1922: plate 17). This picture may be either Conibo or Campa. The *cushma* shows the vertical warp stripes with no painted designs, and the bandolier is characteristic of Arawakan-speaking Campa Indians who live on the headwater tributaries of the Ucayali.

It is possible that some Conibo wore plain, striped cotton garments until the late 19th century, but Farabee’s 1907–1908 visit to the Ucayali records Conibo women wearing “cotton skirts and shoulder cloaks” (Farabee, 1922: 82). His illustrations demonstrate that these were painted with the intricate designs characteristic of the riverine Panoans. Farabee also states that “sometimes, instead of a cloak, they wear a waist (an historical term for a blouse) with short sleeves.” Illustrations of Shipibo and Conibo in Farabee’s book show women only with the cotton cloaks, which are approximately the same dimensions as a dress but lack a seam to close the tube. The waist that

sometimes was worn may be the first indication of a shift to using the blouse or *coton* that is used by all traditional Shipibo women today. The *coton* was probably not in use much before the beginning of the 20th century.

Today, Shipibo clothing is used as a symbol of identity and political solidarity by both men and women but is not worn by young people in the villages. Western-style, commercially made clothing is common, while traditional dress is reserved for ceremonial or special occasions and especially important for display to visiting dignitaries. Today, Shipibo men are frequently employed as guides and informants to scientists, explorers, and tourists. Western tailored clothing suits this kind of employment. In contrast, women gain their livelihood by selling arts and crafts to tourists, and traditional dress is for them a useful marketing tool. Money earned has allowed many Shipibo to purchase useful manufactured imports, such as metal cooking pots, plastic containers, Western clothing, guns, boats, motors, beads, and, more recently, modern electronics.

In 2004, processes of change were further accelerated when construction began on the Interoceanic Highway to link Brazil’s Atlantic coast with Peru’s Pacific ports. Even before its completion, the highway had major impacts on conservation efforts and indigenous rights (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interoceanic_Highway [accessed December 9, 2014]). While not immediately near the Shipibo lands, the road passes through other environmentally rich areas, such as the Tambopata Reserved Zone near Madre de Dios. Finished in the fall of 2014, the 2,603-km road is expected to cause unknown and substantial demographic shifts, environmental changes, and further pressures of globalization.

Most contemporary Shipibo men and women are bilingual in Spanish and their native language. Still, they maintain a strong ethnic identity and remain culturally distinct from the purely Spanish-speaking population that is now the majority of the area. They clearly state their pride in their culture in the documentary *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*. It remains to be seen how they will balance their desire to maintain their distinct identity with the changes wrought by the expanding national economic frontier.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXTUALIZING THE COLLECTION: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE BUFFER ZONE OF THE CORDILLERA AZUL NATIONAL PARK

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Abstract

The chapter documents the background for the Shipibo collection building that encompassed the production of the documentary *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*. It describes the community engagement components of the environmental conservation efforts in Cordillera Azul National Park and the role of collections in that effort. It justifies the view of the collections as “agents of engagement,” with a role that goes beyond their research value.

Resumen

Este capítulo documenta el historial de la formación de la colección shipibo que abarcó la producción del documental, *Shipibo: La película de Nuestra Memoria*. Se describen los componentes de participación comunitaria en sus esfuerzos para la conservación del medio ambiente en el Parque Nacional Cordillera Azul y el papel que juegan las colecciones en este esfuerzo. Justifica la percepción de las colecciones como “agentes de involucramiento,” con un papel que va más allá de su valor para la investigación.

Introduction

The collection documented in this volume and the film *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories* was produced as part of a larger effort to strengthen community participation in environmental conservation efforts and natural resource management practices in the communities on the eastern side of the Buffer Zone of Peru's Cordillera Azul National Park (Fig. 1.1). These efforts entailed the development of new methodologies for rapid participatory appraisal of community capacities and ecological knowledge and improving local land use planning. The more participatory methods were an attempt to address concerns that have arisen in other such large-scale interventions, largely because international modes of conservation have often been imposed on local people without their full participation (see Doane, 2012). Our approach incorporated anthropological understandings of cultural practices and economic and political constraints for local people in order to develop interventions that could empower people to make decisions about using their natural resources. As part of this approach, we decided that physically linking the communities to the Field Museum through a collection of their material culture would afford an effective entryway to engagement around the broader issues of land use and environmental conservation. Interacting with Shipibo people around their art, something they valued, enabled us to gain trust and an opening for dialogue.

This collection, then, should be viewed as more than an assemblage of objects for future study or for their representational potential in a museum exhibit. Rather, the collections can

be thought of as “agents of engagement”—a vehicle for ongoing interaction and transaction between the Shipibo women making objects, the team working on the environmental conservation effort, and the museum staff curating the objects. The collections, as such, are a process, not a product to be placed on shelves. This perspective differs from the historical reasons that spurred the growth of collections in natural history museums from the late 19th century to well into the 20th century (Harrison, 2013). As museums shift collection-making practices in response to deep changes in the relationships between museum-based professionals and source communities (Peers & Brown, 2003), financial constraints, and other factors, new approaches to collection building and curation are emerging. The Pisqui Shipibo collection (Accessions 4250 and 4251) is an example of this new approach.

I begin with a general description of the conservation effort and then describe the specific methodologies used to engage people and the impact on textile production. I conclude with a discussion of how this different context for collecting provides an avenue for transforming museum practice and for rethinking the value of collections for the future.

The events and processes I describe occurred from 2001 to 2013 and represent numerous field trips, collaborations, and programmatic initiatives. To re-create the narrative, I have relied on my field journals, interview notes, and trip reports and also long conversations with my collaborators in this project, Claire Odland and Nancy Feldman (see their chapters elsewhere in this volume).

Environmental Conservation in the Cordillera Azul National Park Region

In 1994, as a result of strategic planning at the time of the Field Museum's Centennial, the Museum administration established a two-pronged effort to increase the relevance and reach of the collections and the Museum's scientific expertise. Through the Office of Environment and Conservation Programs (ECP), the Museum began to engage directly in environmental conservation efforts and through the Center for Cultural Understanding and Change (CCUC); it began to promote greater awareness of the value of cultural diversity to both understanding and solving contemporary social concerns. In 1998, these two units began to work together to create a more synergistic approach toward the human-environment interface. Initially, the joint effort concentrated in the Chicago region, specifically the Calumet ecosystem, which spans southeastern Chicago into northwestern Indiana (<http://www.fieldmuseum.org/calumet>).

In 2001, staff from the CCUC (myself, as founding director, included) began to participate in the environmental conservation efforts in the Andes/Amazon region as well. Dr. Debra Moskovits, the leader of ECP, recognized that successful conservation efforts had to incorporate strategies for engaging local people in the creation and maintenance of protected areas. At the time, ECP staff had focused on using rapid inventories of biological and cultural diversity to document the value of setting aside large intact forest ecosystems for protection. Rapid inventories is a method of conserving broad swaths of biologically diverse habitats pioneered in the early 1990s by a small group of ecologists and biologists working with Conservation International (CI), then a new international nongovernmental organization (NGO). The effort was called the Rapid Assessment Program. The objective of the inventories was to quickly identify highly diverse landscapes in the neotropics that could be designated for protection. In 1999, some members of the CI program, based at the Field Museum, separated from CI and initiated their own effort, which was titled Rapid Biological Inventories (cf. Alverson et al., 2001).

Subsequently, in one case, after the official designation of the Cordillera Azul National Park in northern Peru, the Field Museum team decided to go beyond the rapid inventory and collaborate on long-term sustainability for the Park and its Buffer Zone (Del Campo & Wali, 2007).

The Cordillera Azul National Park is located in the tropical Andes of central Peru between the Huallaga and Ucayali rivers. It covers an area of 1,353,191 ha (as large as the state of Connecticut), most of which belongs to an isolated mountain range rising from 200 up to 2,400 m. This is one of the most diverse protected areas in Peru with an exceptional biological and habitat richness and covers two of the priority areas for biodiversity conservation in Peru, as established in Peru's 1999 "*Plan Director*" for conservation ((Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales, 1999). The establishment of the park in May 2001 was a direct result of a rapid biological inventory by the Field Museum that recorded more than 1,500 plants, 73 mammals, at least 82 amphibians and reptiles, 91 fishes, and more than 520 birds, leading to the discovery of at least 30 species of plants and animals new to science. The inventory conducted in 2000 recorded the enormous diversity of habitat types, from elfin forest over the mountain ridges to high-

altitude marshlands and lakes, sheer rock cliffs, and unusual eroded rock formations. The park protects the headwaters of virtually all rivers in the region and is large enough to protect biological communities and the ecosystem processes critical to sustain them in the long term (Alverson et al., 2001).

Although the Peruvian government decreed the park, it was not willing to take sole responsibility for its management and protection. Rather, a new model for conservation emerged, one that created public-private partnerships for comanagement. This placed the responsibility for securing finances and establishing management protocols in the private sector, while the government retained authority over the protection aspects (e.g., the park guards were officially government employees). A newly established NGO, CIMA-Cordillera Azul (Centro de Conservación, Investigación y Manejo de Áreas Naturales [<http://www.cima.org.pe>]), was awarded the contract to administer the park. The Field Museum, which had collaborated with CIMA from the beginning to develop this strategy, undertook responsibility to aid in securing financing for park operations and developing the conservation strategy. The Field Museum's close relationship with CIMA had developed during the rapid inventory and was in part a result of the passion everyone felt to protect the incredible landscapes of the Cordillera Azul. Both Moskovits and I became deeply engaged with these efforts and continued until 2014 to work closely with CIMA staff.

On both sides of the park, between the Ucayali and Huallaga rivers, lies the extensive Buffer Zone of the park, an area of more than 2,000,000 ha (nearly 5,000,000 acres; see Fig. 1.1). In these lowland forests are established indigenous communities and rural towns with a high cultural diversity, adding up to close to 250,000 people. Of these, about 75,000 to 100,000 live in areas with relatively easy access to the park via rivers or existing trails. The conservation challenge was to ensure that the vast area be safeguarded in an effective way. The conservation team decided to focus protection efforts on those sectors/geographies that were most vulnerable to entry. The team identified initially 11 such "intervention areas" (see Fig. 1.1). CIMA established its first field office in the town of Tarapoto, on the Huallaga River, but gradually added three other field offices to establish a regional presence: (1) Tocache, also on the Huallaga River; (2) Contamana on the Ucayali River; and (3) Aguaytía on the southern periphery of the park. Each office was responsible for protection efforts in its sector, handling logistics for the park guards.

Inside the park, human activities are low. The major threats stemmed from ongoing private and government efforts for intensive resource extraction outside the park. At one point, soon after the park had been decreed, the oil company Occidental Petroleum tried to establish a concession inside the park. CIMA and Field Museum staff vigorously opposed the concession and were successful in getting Occidental to retract. On the eastern side of the park, the Peruvian government had designated a vast swath of the Buffer Zone as "productive forest" that could be licensed for logging. Although Peru had a forestry law that decreed that all logging required management plans and registered concessions, enforcement was weak. All around the Buffer Zone, there were small-, medium-, and large-scale logging enterprises that were engaged in both legal and illegal activities. Illegal activities often involved logging entrepreneurs establishing patron-client relationships with local men who would do the actual work of cutting and bringing the

trees to the sawmills. These types of nonsystematic, informal logging practices were difficult to monitor and difficult to prevent. We recognized that standard park protection methods—establishing a secure perimeter with adequate patrols—would not function for this region. There were too many people in the Buffer Zone and too few financial resources to construct a secure enclosure. In any case, more than two decades of experience with attempts to establish protected areas in developing countries had demonstrated that in the overwhelming number of cases, such “exclusionary” methods had led to more encroachment rather than less and significant social and economic cost to local populations (Colchester, 1994; Chapin, 2004; Brosius et al., 2005; West et al., 2006).

As work progressed on creating more feasible and practical legal and administrative structures and protocols for park management, the CIMA and Field Museum team visited communities in the Buffer Zone that had the easiest access into the park to discuss their perspectives on protection efforts. Conversations with residents elicited a surprising finding: most were very supportive of the creation of the park and recognized the need for more conservation of the forests both inside and outside of the park. Residents, especially on the Huallaga side, had experienced the consequences of severe deforestation—both those who had migrated to the region from other regions of Peru where deforestation had forced them to leave in search of better lands and those from the region who had experienced deforestation and devastation as a result of the drug wars (the Huallaga was the heart of Peru’s coca production and had been the site of ongoing conflict between the government and narcotraffickers throughout the 1990s). The existing “goodwill” toward the park led the team to take a more participatory approach to park protection, one that would actively engage residents in the Buffer Zone while also devoting resources to improve their quality of life through empowering them to better manage their natural resources and lessen dependence on heavily extractive economic activities. In the following section, I describe the methodologies we used to engage the Buffer Zone communities.

An Assets-Based Approach to Environmental Conservation

Conservation efforts now have a long history of community engagement efforts (Alcorn, 2005; Brosius et al., 2005; Gollin & Kho, 2008). These efforts have been modeled mainly on economic development strategies with the underlying assumption that by improving the economic base of the communities near protected areas, the communities would be less inclined to “poach” or threaten the conservation objectives of the region. This assumption included several associated assumptions: (1) that local people were drivers of environmental degradation through their economic activities, (2) that local people were impoverished and desirous of better economic opportunities that would put them on a path toward a “standard” of comfortable life (such as a higher per capita income, better access to education, and improved health outcomes), and (3) that providing these improvements could be done in a sustainable manner. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, conservation organizations developed what came to be called

“integrated conservation and development programs” with the objective of achieving these goals. The results, however, were far from satisfactory, as has been extensively documented (Borrini-Feyerabend & Brockington, 2006; Cernea, 2006).

By the early 21st century, the failure of these approaches was widely recognized, and organizations searched for better methodologies for working with communities. Simultaneously, a smaller set of efforts were under way, guided by more anthropological research on the social dynamics of smallholder communities whose livelihoods were still largely dependent on the direct use of natural resources through a combination of small-scale agriculture or horticulture, livestock husbandry, hunting, and fishing.

Anthropological research on these peoples had demonstrated the complex interweave of the retention of cultural practices associated with this form of livelihood and the drivers of resource extraction that characterized the homelands of these peoples in the post–World War II era (Sterling et al., 2008). Anthropologists argued that economic development strategies designed to integrate these people into more market-oriented modes of production would inevitably fail to provide a sustainable alternative to their existing livelihood strategies or halt progressive impoverishment. Rather, anthropologists argued that the alternative to “development” should be “empowerment”—building the capacity of communities to make sound resource management decisions based on realistic assessments of their needs and capabilities. This model undergirded the “grassroots development” approach employed by a smaller set of NGOs (Cernea, 1985; Gardner & Lewis, 1996; COMPAS, 2007; Chambers, 2005). The premise undergirding this approach, in contrast to the standard development model, was that communities had the knowledge and expertise to develop sustainable resource management strategies but lacked the political and social power to implement these and were rather being relentlessly drawn further into intensive resource extraction modalities. The programmatic efforts guided by this model required methods that would allow people to find their own voice and create more locally driven methods for improving quality of life.

These grassroots development strategies, because they promote continued subsistence-oriented livelihoods that are not dependent on intensive extraction, are compatible with environmental conservation that requires avoiding deforestation. Yet major conservation organizations were slow to adopt this approach (but for an exception, see Allegretti, 1990; Schwartzmann et al., 2000). Rather, the grassroots development or empowerment approach has been used in relatively small scale or localized efforts, dispersed across wide swaths of forest-dwelling regions (or other fragile ecosystems) throughout the global South.

Given the high level of interest in protecting natural resources among the Buffer Zone communities of the Cordillera Azul National Park, the CIMA and Field Museum team believed that the grassroots approach would be the most appropriate. As the senior anthropologist on the team, I advocated that we first identify and make visible the sources of local capacities and ecological expertise that would be the building blocks of the programmatic efforts to promote stewardship of the natural resources in the Buffer Zone and the park. I wanted to call attention to the local social “assets” that we hoped to strengthen in order to empower the resident communities.

Together with colleagues in Peru, we constructed an assessment tool that we called the *Mapeo de Usos y Fortalezas*—a Spanish translation of “asset mapping”—a methodology that I had already adapted from urban planners and used in the urban setting of Chicago’s Calumet region (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Wali et al., 2003).

For the Peruvian location, the asset mapping (MUF for short) focused on identifying local ecological knowledge and forms of subsistence activities that characterized the forest-based livelihoods of the resident population. The MUF was actually a combination of different existing diagnostic instruments, such as sketch mapping, ethnocartography, and participatory rapid appraisal. By combining these systematically, we were able to provide a more comprehensive place-based assessment that integrated the identification of ecological knowledge, forms of social organization, and local institutional capacities. The MUF also incorporated community perceptions of well-being, the park, and conservation efforts. Finally, it was accompanied by a threat analysis. To my knowledge, this was the first time that such a methodology had been used in the context of a conservation effort of this scale. A distinctive feature of the MUF was that it called for the participation of village residents in the collection of information. We asked each participating community to select a “MUF facilitator” who would be responsible for conducting the assessment. We trained the facilitators in a workshop that for the first time brought together people from the different communities in the Buffer Zone. Although the standard practice for rapid participatory appraisals (Chambers, 1994) is to conduct them in two- or three-day time frames, I felt that a longer time was necessary to truly allow for broad participation and heterogeneity of responses. We gave the facilitators two months to collect the data and structured it so that women and youth could participate without domination from adult men (who by and large controlled political authority in many of the villages). The community facilitators were supported by the CIMA field staff, who visited each community at midpoint and also conducted interviews around more sensitive subjects that we felt might be awkward for the facilitators (things such as internal village conflicts and some household economic data). At the end of the two months, the facilitators convened in regional clusters to analyze their data. Afterward, all of the information was digitized in a database linked to a GIS program that helped us produce maps to visualize key findings. The information was then returned to the villages in accessible formats (drawings and maps accompanied by minimal text) and also used in the master plan for the park management (CIMA, 2006).

The initial MUF was conducted in 2003, with 53 communities located in the critical areas of the park. Subsequently, MUFs were conducted in 2005, 2008, and 2012 by CIMA staff and community facilitators. Each time, we improved the instrument and the analysis of the data to streamline its utility for designing programmatic efforts to empower communities to manage their natural resources and participate in conservation of the park. Between 2002 and 2009, most of these programmatic efforts were concentrated in the western, or Huallaga, side of the park’s Buffer Zone, which had the more dense population and where threats of forest degradation and encroachment into the park were more urgent.

However, as early as 2006, the Museum and CIMA staff recognized that actively involving the eastern Buffer Zone

populations in management activities and promoting ecologically compatible natural resource use would be crucial for the long-term conservation of the whole Cordillera Azul National Park. The population of the eastern Buffer Zone consists largely of indigenous populations: Shipibo-Conibo, Kakataibo, and Yine/Piro. There are a total of 51 settlements (villages and small towns) with an estimated total of 6,000 people (2008 census). Of these, the Shipibo are the most populous. The majority of Shipibo settlements are on the Pisqui River, a tributary of the Ucayali. These communities range in size, from a maximum of about 1,000 people to the smallest with a population of about 100. Before detailing the project with the Pisqui Shipibo, I give a brief overview of their social and economic situation.

Overall Sociopolitical Context of the Pisqui Communities

The 10 Shipibo communities of the Pisqui River are located along the length of the river, from where it flows into the Ucayali to near its headwaters, at the entrance to the Cordillera Azul National Park (see Fig. 1.1). Life centers on cultivating small (1–2 ha) fields for typical staples, such as plantains and yucca, and hunting, fishing, and foraging. Produce from the fields is sold to itinerant merchants who visit the communities at irregular intervals. Some people also take their produce to the town of Contamana, the provincial capital. Since at least the 1990s, some people have also entered into contractual relationships with logging entrepreneurs. Most of these contracts are individual, setting up patron–client relationships. However, in most cases, the village political authorities sanction the logging by signing accords with the loggers for which the village might receive either cash or “gifts,” such as outboard motors, electric generators, soccer fields, or other infrastructure installations. At the household level, money earned from the sale of cultivated produce is used to buy household items (clothes, ammunition, gasoline for transport, and so on), while much of the money earned from selling timber (controlled by the men) goes to luxury items (watches, fancier clothes, cigarette lighters, and radios), of which alcohol is significant. Occasionally, a man might earn enough from logging to buy a new canoe and outboard motor.

The relationships with the logging entrepreneurs have played a role in the way that the Pisqui communities viewed the park and conservation efforts. In those communities where the relationships were strong and were with influential men, an active resistance to the park emerged. Another factor affecting perceptions of the park was the relative state of forest health on the eastern side of the Buffer Zone. Here, there had been little degradation due to the less dense population and newness of logging. People could not literally see the threat to the forest and saw no need for special protection efforts. Engaging the Shipibo communities, then, proved more challenging than the work on the western side of the Buffer Zone.

Engaging the Shipibo through Collection Building

I first encountered the Shipibo people in 2001 on my first visit to the Cordillera Azul Park’s Buffer Zone communities. Prior to



FIG. 3.1. Park guards and boat crew on the Pisqui River, 2007. Photo: J. C. Odland.

visiting the main Shipibo communities in the Pisqui River, I accompanied Anna Roosevelt, Chris Philipp, and Ron Weber to attend a three-day puberty ritual in the Shipibo community of Nuevo Chicago, which was close to San Francisco de Yarinacocha, the Shipibo settlement closest to the regional capital city of Pucallpa. On this occasion, Roosevelt made a collection of ceramics, textiles, and handcrafts to add to the existing collection. This experience provided a good comparison point for the visit to the Pisqui region—much more remote and more difficult to access. I visited two communities farthest upriver on the Pisqui River, closest to the park boundary—Nuevo Eden and Manco Capac. I spent a week in the region in the company of CIMA staff, living in these communities, conducting a community assembly to discuss the park, and conversing with the residents. It was on this visit that I experienced the internal conflicts that had emerged as a result of both the illegal logging and the conservation efforts. In the community assembly in Nuevo Eden, for example, some residents complained loudly about the lack of “jobs” and demanded that the park officials provide them with jobs and improvements in their village if they wanted the village to stop working with loggers. However, in more informal conversations, particularly older people mentioned nostalgia for their way of life and feared the consequences of increasing extraction of their natural resources through logging or oil exploration. In addition, while antipark sentiments were strong in Nuevo Eden, they were not in the smaller community of Manco Capac, where no one was working with loggers.

It was not until 2007, however, that I was able to dedicate more concerted time to the efforts for engaging the Shipibo communities. By then, it had become clear that although less populated, increased illegal logging and a widening agricultural frontier also threatened the eastern side of the park. In the Pisqui River region, particularly, illegal logging was accelerat-

ing, according to reports from the park guards (Fig. 3.1), and causing tensions between the communities and the park team. CIMA asked the Field Museum staff to work with the Contamana-based extension team to assess the situation in the Pisqui.

The request from CIMA to concentrate efforts on the eastern side came at the same time that the Anthropology Department began to access a new source of funding for collections acquisitions (Wali, 2014). The new fund, derived from the sale of 19th-century paintings of Native Americans by renowned artist George Catlin, permitted the department to undertake major collecting projects for the first time since the mid-20th century. The department established a procedure for making new collections that required each curator to submit proposals/justifications for the collection acquisition and obtain approval from the curators. After thinking through the CIMA request, I planned to use collection building as a strategy for engaging the Pisqui Shipibo communities in the stewardship of the park.

My reasoning for using collections acquisition to spur community engagement was based on several factors. First, the findings from the MUF of 2003 and 2005 indicated that the Pisqui Shipibo had maintained vital cultural practices linked to a subsistence-oriented livelihood. The Pisqui Shipibo, for example, relied heavily on what Eric Wolf (1982: 393–400) has termed a “kinship mode of production.” This entails the organization of resource use through reciprocal and redistributive relations with extended family and village-level networks. Most labor for maintenance of horticultural plots, hunting, and fishing occurred in cooperative kin groups. The exception was when men entered into illegal logging activities. In those cases, cash income was not shared with other members outside the immediate family. Other relevant MUF findings included the extensive local knowledge of flora and fauna, the patterns of resource use that were compatible with maintenance of intact

forests, and the largely dominant monolingual use of the Shipibo language. All of these practices, what we termed “social assets,” indicated the existing strengths of natural resource management practices on which we could build further conservation efforts.

Second, specifically related to the collections project was the persistence of a vibrant craft tradition among the Pisqui Shipibo. The women not only wore and made their skirts and blouses but also made ceramics, a practice that had largely disappeared from the Shipibo communities closer to Pucallpa. Women were making these objects largely for use, although there was the aspiration to increase sale of the crafts. The remoteness of the region and the difficulty of travel to markets minimized the actual sale of these crafts. The handcrafts were certainly of significant quality and interest to be included in the Field Museum Collections. They would represent a comparative example for the existing collection, which had come largely from places closer to Pucallpa or were historic (see Appendix I).

The findings of the MUF and the strong presence of material culture production highlighted the potential for using collections acquisition to create a space of reflection for the Shipibo to weigh the competing values of their subsistence livelihoods and integration into market economies. In proposing the Shipibo collections project, my hope was that while the Museum would benefit from adding a significant collection to its existing Shipibo collections, the Shipibo and the conservation effort of the Cordillera Azul National Park would also benefit. I felt that the Shipibo would perceive their own cultural production in a more valued light if they saw their work represented in a museum collection. A desired outcome was also the encouragement that collecting for the Field Museum would provide to the women to continue in their craft production. A third objective was to engender trust among Shipibo women and their communities for the park management team. The collections project, then, was part of the effort to create a greater sense of value for the artistic work to generate pride in the local knowledge and practices, reinforcing values associated with subsistence as opposed to the market.

The collecting trip to the Pisqui in 2007 was done over 10 days, with visits to the villages of Santa Rosa, San Luis de Charasmaná, La Cumbre, Manco Capac, and Nuevo Eden, together with Claire Odland. Odland (this volume) had edited silent footage made by Harry Tschopik in the 1950s of daily life in a Shipibo community, and we intended to show the footage on the trip and elicit commentary from the villagers. Odland had especially focused her editing on showcasing footage of women making ceramics and textiles as well as scenes of daily life and some ceremonies. We felt that showing the footage of past occurrences would prompt them to reflect on the changes between the 1950s and the current period in daily life and in material culture production.

Prior to leaving for the trip up the river, we received a visit at CIMA's Contamana office from a delegation of about 10 men from Nuevo Eden, including the village chief (*apu*). They stated that they did not want us to do any collecting or work with Nuevo Eden because they were not in favor of the existence of the park and the work of CIMA. They expressed a sense of injury over the recent actions of the park guards, who had detained about 11 men from the community after they were seen with timber extracted from within the park's boundaries. The men were awaiting judicial procedures. We assured them

that we would do no collecting in Nuevo Eden. However, we decided to attend a public meeting that was to be held there during our trip to discuss a new oil exploration project that was to be undertaken by a Canadian company together with the Peruvian Oil Company. The decision to not make a collection in Nuevo Eden was disheartening. One of the foremost collectors of Shipibo ceramics, Martin Ccorisapra, who would collaborate with us later on the production of *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*, had already told us that Nuevo Eden women made some of the best ceramics in the region. Ccorisapra had long purchased ceramics from Nuevo Eden and had helped to finance efforts to title lands of some of the Shipibo communities. However, we recognized that the conflictive relations had to improve before CIMA and the Field Museum could work with Nuevo Eden. We focused the bulk of our collecting in San Luis de Charasmaná, La Cumbre, and Manco Capac (Fig. 3.2).

In all three communities, we collected both textiles and ceramics (the collections details are described in Odland's chapter in Part II of this volume). However, the bulk of the ceramics were collected in La Cumbre and Manco Capac. These two communities are the farthest upriver (except for Nuevo Eden) and smaller in size. In each of these, we discovered that craft production was mainly a cooperative affair between extended kin groups. Sisters, daughters, aunts, and affines shared materials and worked together. In each village, only a few of the women were making ceramics, but the majority of the women made textiles and also did beadwork. Our process for buying the crafts was simple. We asked the women to assemble their crafts in the common assembly house and then to set their price. We tried to purchase something from every woman who offered. We had made receipts for the purchases, each one with the Field Museum logo. Every time we handed over a receipt, we explained that the crafts would now join the collection of the Field Museum, which has objects from all around the world (Fig. 3.3). We explained how their crafts would be cared for and why they belonged in a museum.

Although the collection we made was relatively small—26 ceramics, 50 textiles, eight objects related to the production of ceramics and textiles, and five household items—the act of collecting accomplished our objective of building confidence in the communities toward the park management team. One incident demonstrates this. During our stay in San Luis de Charasmaná, the former president of the Indigenous Federation (discussed in more detail below), which represents the Pisqui communities, also arrived on his way to Nuevo Eden, where he was arranging the public meeting for the oil company representatives. The president further engaged us in conversation with members of the community and harshly criticized the park team and CIMA. However, members of the community spoke in favor of the work we were doing and criticized the president for his failure to deliver on land titling. The fact that we were there to both validate cultural practices and purchase crafts—at a price the women deemed fair—was evidence that contradicted the president's portrayal of CIMA as uncaring or unconcerned about the community. I believe that the showing of the Tschopik documentary footage also created a positive attitude toward CIMA and our efforts. People were visibly moved as they watched the film, and long conversations ensued with considerable commentary on what people remembered of the practices from that time (Fig. 3.4).



FIG. 3.2. Native community of San Luís de Charasmaná, 2010. Photo: N. Feldman.

Another telling moment came during our visit to Nuevo Eden. We arrived just shortly before the helicopter bearing the oil company and government representatives. We quietly entered the village from the dock and went to the common assembly hall. In contrast, the oil company officials and government representatives from the Ministry of Energy and Mining together with the Federation president made a grand entrance, escorted in the traditional style, by women and girls

with faces painted. The assembly hall was packed for the presentation, complete with a PowerPoint projection that included maps of projected seismic exploration lines and promises of jobs. Afterward, as people were dispersing, women came to talk with us and asked if we wanted to buy their ceramics and textiles. They had heard from relatives in Manco Capac and La Cumbre that we were purchasing crafts. We explained with regret that their community leaders had



FIG. 3.3. Young woman signing her receipt for Field Museum purchase, 2007. Photo: J. C. Odland.

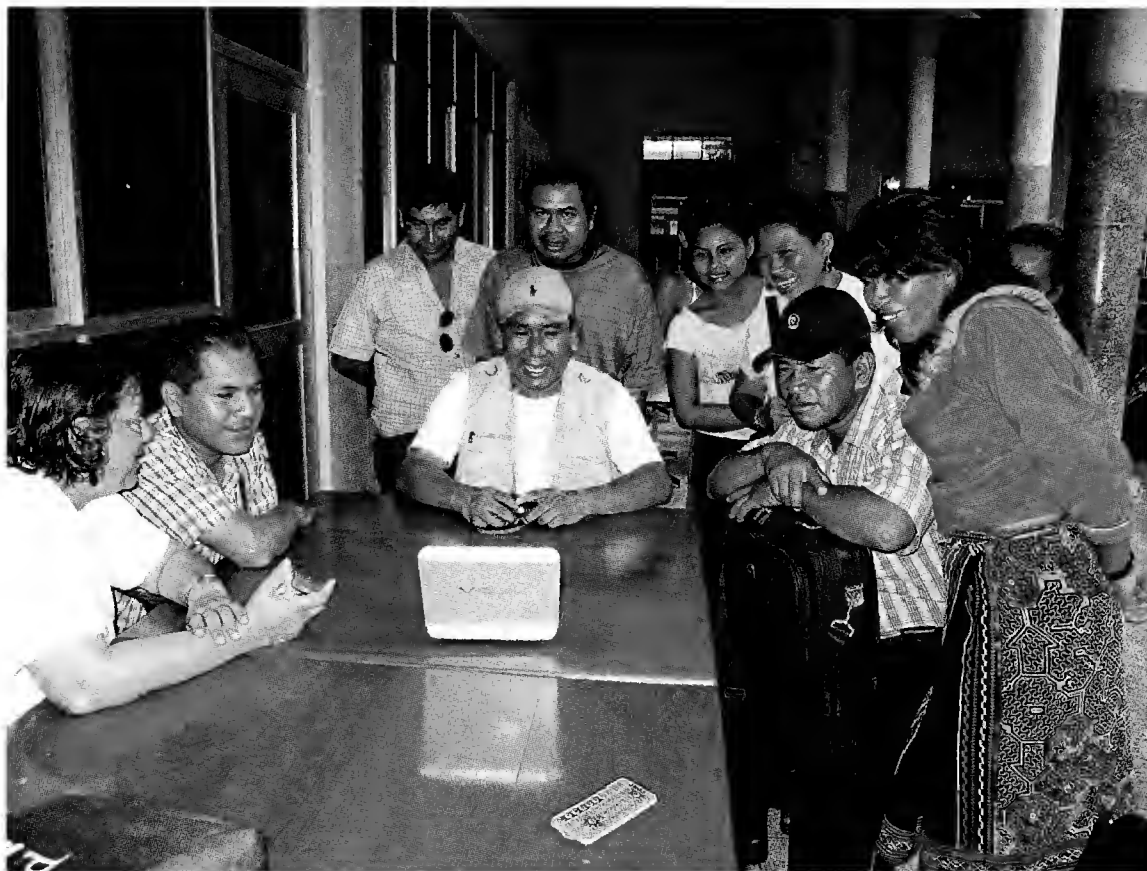


FIG. 3.4. Mayor Roberto Silvano Rengifo and delegations from Native communities of Iparia and Yarinacocha first viewing *El Pueblo Shipibo*, 2007, Pucallpa. Photo: J. C. Odland.

forbidden us from making these purchases or working with the community. The women were clearly disappointed. It was our hope that the women of Nuevo Eden would be able to convince the men that they should change their position and begin to cooperate with CIMA, forsaking illegal logging and oil exploration. According to the CIMA staff, in fact, only a handful of men actually participated in the logging (and were also advocating for oil exploration), but these few had disproportionate political influence in the community. This pro-logging faction controlled village political offices (and also, until recently, the leadership of the Indigenous Federation, whose previously mentioned president was from Nuevo Eden).

The women perceive the sale of handcrafts as a source of income that they can control and use for improving their children's lives. Women's lives and economic contributions were much more closely tied to daily subsistence and home care activities. Women harvested the crops from the gardens (although men cleared and planted the fields), processed the game and fish for daily meals, fetched water, and tended kitchen gardens and fruit orchards. Women depended on healthy rivers for the clay they used to make their ceramics and intact forest as sources of natural dyes for their textiles. In conversations and during the MUF assessments, women mentioned their concern about contamination of the rivers from the detritus of the logging activities and potential harm that oil exploration might cause.

As we came to understand this close connection between women and natural resources, we recognized that elevating the value of their handcraft production through the collections acquisition would further empower them to give voice to their concerns about the intensified resource extraction. However, we also recognized that a one-time acquisition of handcrafts would be insufficient to spur changes in resource management practices. Ultimately, there would have to be a more sustainable way to generate income for the women through the handcrafts production. In the next section, I discuss how collection

building led to a longer-term effort to improve quality of life in the Shipibo communities.

Quality-of-Life Plans and the Shipibo Handcraft Project

The path to sustain the engagement of the Shipibo communities that had begun with the collection building entailed the development of new methods for supporting community initiatives to improve the quality of life. We understood the need in the communities to generate income, but we wanted the income generation to be only one part of a broader effort to strengthen cultural practices and natural resource management. We also wanted to create long-term stability for existing structures/institutions that were part of the governance structure of indigenous representation in the national arena: the local Federations that were affiliated with two major national indigenous organizations: the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest and CONAP (for a fuller description of these organizations, see Wali, 2012).

The three Federations we decided to work with, beginning in 2009, represent a total of 45 communities between them, spread along the tributaries of the Ucayali River. The principal objective of the Federations is to secure territory through land titling for the communities and facilitate obtaining funds for basic infrastructure improvements. All three Federations, however, lack any significant resources to carry out these activities. Elected leaders serve without remuneration and must depend on funds from NGOs or other entities (e.g., oil companies) to take trips or conduct other activities. They chronically lack funds for maintenance of their offices as well. As a result, the constituent communities chronically complain about Federation leaders and their failure to produce "results,"

as we witnessed with the president of the Pisqui Federation during our 2007 trip.

Our effort emphasized building the capacity of the Federations to address community concerns, regain their trust, and find ways to generate revenue that would sustain them independently of NGO or private sector funds. The project objective was to develop quality-of-life plans for three communities with each Federation (nine communities total) and implement selected priorities from the plans. We envisioned that the plans could become blueprints for self-sufficiency. To reach this goal, we funded a staff position in each Federation whom we would train in social analysis skills and extension methods that would lead to the development of the quality-of-life plan. As a first step, we taught staff from the Federations to conduct a small-scale MUF (participatory social asset mapping). Once the information had been gathered, we worked with the Federation's staff to analyze and interpret the data.

Two new instruments were added to the MUF to provide data on forms of cooperation and on household and community income sources. The first instrument entailed residents creating social network diagrams that revealed the patterns of resource sharing and social ties. Overwhelmingly, the network data confirmed that extended kinship ties prevailed as the major form for organizing labor and sharing of basic subsistence necessities. Only when extractive activities (e.g., logging) came into play did men create ties with nonkin or external actors.

The second instrument entailed a rough measurement of household and community incomes to gauge the economic base of livelihoods. We asked people (gathered in small dialogue groups) to estimate cash equivalents of resources consumed in the household (e.g., basic staples such as plantains, game meat, and fish), amount of products sold to generate income, monthly purchases of nonforest items (clothes, kerosene, gasoline for motors, and so on), and other expenses (pharmacy and school fees). We also asked people to estimate the value of labor that went into cooperative tasks (such as when kin and friends helped to clear a field or build a house or when the community worked together to maintain village infrastructure and organize celebrations). In other words, we were attempting to assign a monetary value to aspects of subsistence livelihoods that to the Stat did not appear to have a value equivalent to the money earned from market-oriented activities. Monetizing both natural and social resources has been strongly critiqued in the anthropological literature (Igoe & Brockington, 2007). In this case, however, we felt that it was a viable strategy to counter the dominant narrative that indigenous communities were poor because they lacked cash. By converting the worth of the forest and the kinship-based modes of production (including forms of reciprocity and redistribution) into a rough monetary equivalent, we were able to demonstrate the considerable "richness" of a way of life that was otherwise besieged. As we analyzed the data from the dialogue groups, we were surprised to learn that indeed the subsistence-based livelihood was a generous one.

In terms of household and community economics, the data revealed that people were able to meet their basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clean water, and health) through use of forest and river resources (cultivated or gathered through their own labor on land that they "owned," i.e., did not have to pay for) and through sale of the products of their fields, game meat, or fish to itinerant merchants. Additionally, because of the relations of

reciprocity, no one was paying to hire labor to cultivate the fields or other such tasks. The only time that money was needed for labor was when someone wanted to "hire" help for logging activities. The household economic analysis that the Federation staff conducted demonstrated that because of the forest "subsidy" and their own cultural practices of reciprocity, households either had sufficient income (or income equivalent) or had a very small "gap" to meet their needs (perhaps 5% at most). They were certainly not poor in terms of self-sufficiency.

The data also revealed that the subsidy from the forest and from cultural practices contributed substantially to the communal well-being as well because people could use natural materials to build communal infrastructure and labor for these efforts was shared by all the residents through the "*minga*" system—the communal contract to mutually participate in the maintenance of the community. Of course, villagers paid no taxes for basic services. The community's largest needs for cash-derived goods came from the household level because some of the infrastructure (e.g., sanitation systems and potable water) required larger capital expenditures than could be derived from subsistence activities alone.

Yet this subsidy from both the forest *and* from cultural practices is neither visible nor accounted for in the way that families and communities think about their position in the economy. When the household and community income data were presented back to the residents, many were incredulous that they were actually better off materially than they thought they were. They had accepted the national definition of their living standard, based on a superficial accounting of per capita income as "poor" or "extremely poor." This self-perception of poverty influenced their desire for expanded access to cash when the reality was that their actual cash needs were low for basic self-sufficiency standards.

Forest dwellers lack the tools and indeed the concepts to resolve the central conflict between holding on to their forests and subsistence-based lifeways and yearning for additional market-based goods. The desire for unlimited commodity goods overpowers other values, making it difficult to set priorities that reflect the blend indigenous peoples would like to achieve between market orientation and subsistence lifestyle. Much of the extension work done by NGOs does not provide opportunities for folk to reflect on choices and decisions they must make. When we asked community participants during the asset mapping to make a list of their desires, the conflict was clear; the lists included items such as "maintaining the forest intact," "strengthening native language retention," and "teaching traditional crafts to children" alongside "expanding cattle ranching" and "building high-maintenance water tank or electricity systems." In the analysis workshops, we used a cost-benefit analysis to get the Federation and CIMA extension staff and community leaders to see the contradictions among these desires, assess what items had higher value in accordance with the stated vision of their communities, and then sort out how to set priorities for their activities. By quantifying (albeit in simple and inexact amounts) the value of forest resources and cultural practices, we were able to provide a way for workshop participants to compare their value for the forest with the value of commodities coming from outside of the forest. Workshop participants told us that they found this a very useful way to think and that it helped them to plan more realistically. Participants saw that by accounting for the value of the forest



FIG. 3.5. Quality-of-life plan, La Cumbre, 2011. Photo: N. Strait.

and indigenous cultural practices, they actually had a stronger economic base than they thought, making planning for the future less daunting and a good quality of life more attainable without resorting to environmentally degrading activities.

A powerful moment during the analysis workshop demonstrates the ways in which this method helped community members to shift perceptions of the relative worth of the forest. As part of the exercise of assessing the worth of the forest, we asked analysis participants to think about its worth for children's education. The initial response was that the forest had zero value for education because education happened in the schoolhouse. We asked then about the knowledge that children gained from going to the forest with their parents and grandparents. I pointed out that I had noticed that children as young as six knew a wide array of plants and identified animals from tracks or sounds and were keen observers. Additionally, children knew early on the social structure of the forest—who cultivated which plots and who could access fallow lands. I pointed out that children had, in fact, knowledge of taxonomy that my colleague ecologists spent many years to acquire at the university. Acknowledging that this knowledge was also valuable (in relation to the reading and writing skills learned in the schoolhouse), the workshop participants changed their perception of forest-based education. Ultimately, they decided that the worth of a forest education would be as great as if not greater than a school-based education.

When the Federation and CIMA staff returned to the communities to discuss the results of the asset mapping and develop the quality-of-life plans, they led discussions that allowed communities to set priorities that reflected a more balanced vision of their future and lifeways. As community members reflected on their priorities, many of the "development"-oriented projects aimed at increasing cash income (e.g., cattle ranching and logging schemes) disappeared from the priorities lists. Items such as the need for bilingual/bicultural education appeared higher on the priorities list. Furthermore, the appeal of initiatives to generate income on a small scale

through renewable resource use gained prominence. Thus, more communities opted for such projects as managed harvests of nontimber forest products and increased access to market for their handcrafts. These new priorities were fleshed out with the action steps required to achieve them and presented in the quality-of-life plan to each community (Fig. 3.5), together with the MUF data. The plans were intended to be flexible documents, with priorities achievable within three years.

Once the communities officially adopted the plans, we began to implement a few of the top priorities. For the Pisqui Shipibo, it was clear that initiating a project to generate income from handcraft sales would empower women and begin to make concrete the promise of the quality-of-life plan. To ensure that the handcraft project was sustainable, we had to meet several challenges. These included the development of a stable market, introducing business planning and money management into the handcraft operations, and improving quality control techniques.

A major hurdle for many handcraft enterprises is creating a stable market. The commerce in indigenous-produced handcrafts tends to be at the mercy of global trends and fads and can fluctuate with the cause célèbre of the day. If there is a famine in Ethiopia, Ethiopian baskets become popular; fiber products from Ugandan women with HIV ride another wave; Kuna women's mola designs are suddenly uplifted into pillow covers and throw rugs; and so on. Specialty stores, such as the Mennonite-run Ten Thousand Villages, cater to the socially conscious buyer but have a limited market (Luetchford, 2008; Lyon & Moberg, 2010). The risk for handcrafts producers is that while their product is in demand, they can achieve a good income flow, but as soon as the market crashes, they have lost the source of income they have come to depend on.

To avoid the problem of instability, we developed a strategy that approached the marketing of the crafts from the perspective of both the producers (Shipibo women) and the potential buyers. We understood from our conversations with the women and community members that there was in general a

lack of knowledge about how markets operate. Women imagined that they could sell their handicrafts in the international market (or even national markets) at high prices and high volumes and that CIMA (as the main organization working with the communities) could “deliver” the market to the communities. There was little conceptualization of the instability of markets or what would be demanded in the way of quality. There was the expectation that CIMA could become a “patron,” just as the logging entrepreneurs were patrons. As we discussed the establishment of the handicrafts effort, we conversed with the women about the realities of the international and national market for their goods. We explained that commerce in handicrafts was vulnerable to changing tastes, difficulties of export, and other factors.

As we tried to bring women’s expectations to a realistic level, we also worked on developing a market strategy. This effort to market the handicrafts raised difficult questions for the CIMA team and me. On the one hand, it was clear that women very much wanted to sell handicrafts and generate income for their families. On the other hand, facilitating the market-based approach was putting us in danger of acting as yet another “patron” and creating dependency. We needed to navigate this terrain with care so that we could empower the women and their communities through the handcraft marketing. To that end, we attempted to accompany the introduction of the market with capacity building in financial management for the women and opportunities for them to reflect on how to balance income generation with other values and priorities associated with well-being.

We realized that the national market would be difficult for the Pisqui women because the Shipibo who lived closer to Pucallpa and Iquitos had much easier access to tourists. Pisqui women who had gone to Iquitos to sell their handicrafts reported receiving low prices for their work. Initially, we were able to make an arrangement with the Field Museum retail store to purchase handbags from the women. The Field Museum’s director of retail sales, Jeri Webb, was eager to promote fair trade products and was familiar with the Shipibo handicrafts, as she had herself purchased other handicrafts from Peru for the store. She agreed that there could be a steady sale of Pisqui textile crafts into the foreseeable future. This was the beginning of a stable market.

As a first step, to build capacity for the women to manage their handcraft project, we invited a Colorado-based NGO, Village Earth (<http://villageearth.org/our-story/mission-and-history>), to train the women in planning, setting goals, and establishing operating procedures. All the women who had expressed interest in participating in the handcraft project from three villages attended the workshop. Village Earth’s approach is oriented toward empowerment rather than mere production of handicrafts for the market. They were already working with Shipibo women in Pucallpa. The three-day workshop in the community of San Luis de Charasmaná was one of the first times that the women had ever had the opportunity to reflect on why they wanted income and what long-term vision they had for their families and communities. Women from each community set 90-day goals, one-year objectives, and a long-term vision for their communities. We provided the women with the materials for making the handbags, explaining that this first-time infusion of “capital” was a demonstration of the commitment of the park

team to collaborate with the communities so that both the park and the people would benefit.

The women proceeded to make the handbags, and in July 2010, we purchased 500 handbags for the Field Museum store, visiting each village to make the purchase. Each woman who sold us her handicrafts received a receipt detailing the sale and with the logo of the Field Museum. We also committed to continue to develop the market for the handicrafts. In turn, we asked that the community continue to follow their priorities as written in their quality-of-life plans and not enter into more contracts with illegal loggers. This was the same field trip where we were accompanied by the film crew that was to make *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*. The film crew (Fig. 3.6) documented the purchase of the handbags, and a small snippet of the transaction is in the documentary.

Through the Field Museum stores director, we also met a Lima-based entrepreneur, April Borda, who had her own business working with high-end fashion designers in Europe and the United States. Borda supplied the designers with handcrafted knitted goods made to their specifications. She also designed clothing and accessories. Although she worked mostly with craftspeople in Andean communities or in Lima, she had just begun to take an interest in Shipibo crafts. Borda was intrigued with the idea of supporting the conservation effort for Cordillera Azul National Park by finding a market for the Shipibo women. She brought together several designers (two Peruvian and one American), and in 2011, we organized a workshop for the designers to meet the Shipibo women and discuss potential products they could make (Fig. 3.7).

The four designers attended a workshop we organized with CIMA in the summer of 2011. Four or five women from three Pisqui communities where we had made collections—Charasmaná, Manco Capac, and La Cumbre—attended the workshop in Contamana at CIMA’s field office. Together with the women, we invited authorities from the villages and also the park guards who were stationed near these villages. During the workshop, the designers demonstrated designs they wanted, explained the quality standards they needed, and accompanied the women as they made test products. The women were able to express their concerns about some of the embroidery requirements and also negotiated a price for their products directly with the designers. The designers decided to order a small batch of products (embroidered and painted handbags, T-shirts, and embroidered pieces). During the course of the workshop, we also conversed with the designers about the data from the MUF and made them aware that the goal was not to expand infinitely the opportunity for revenue generation. Rather, we anticipated that a small but stable market for the handicrafts would be sufficient to achieve the desired quality-of-life improvements.

An interesting revelation to us during the workshop was about the nature of the designs. We had assumed that the more densely embroidered patterns were “traditional.” The designers had asked the women to make embroidery patterns on the T-shirts that were not quite so dense, and we worried that this was introducing a commercial format. However, some of the women commented that the less dense style was an older style, while more density was recent. The *process* of working with the women to generate a sustainable market for their handicrafts thus generated insights that could inform the collection we had made earlier. The entire Shipibo collection contains objects from different time periods and allows us to compare design



FIG. 3.6. Children in Manco Cápac watching museum team at work, with videographer Fernando Valdivia, and Nancy Feldman, 2010. Photo: A. Giraldo.

and patterns in the ceramics and textiles. The process of collaboration with the women artisans in this way enriched our understanding and interpretation of the collection (for an interesting commentary on design and residence pattern, see also Roe, 1980).

During the workshop, we also led more discussions with the women on priority setting for their use of anticipated revenues

and on how to balance the need for money with other values. We used visual materials that depicted the findings from the MUF about how important their close attachment to their landscape (their place), their dependence on the natural resources for their livelihoods, and the necessity of maintaining healthy forests and rivers were for the success of their handcraft project. The women decided that they would like to use the



FIG. 3.7. Designer April Borda with Panchita Linares and other Shipibo artisans in Contamana workshop. 2011. Photo: J. Bulkan.

revenues from the project for “capital” to reinvest in supplies, school fees for their children and associated expenses, and communal and household needs. The workshop created a space of dialogue during which women were able to place the importance of income generation within a broader context of community values and beliefs.

After the workshop, the women did their best to fulfill the designers’ orders. However, the CIMA staff was not able to provide close guidance or support due to the difficulties created by the large distances between Contamana and the Pisqui region and budget constraints that led to a reduction in the number of community visits that CIMA extension agents could make to the communities. As a result, there was not sufficient attention to quality control. When the designers received the finished items, they felt that while most were fine, there was a lack of polish and also some had been stained or marked either during the making or during the transport. It was clear that more work needed to be done if the women were going to continue to produce for the international market. Subsequently, CIMA organized further workshops for the women on how to improve the quality of the products. The further training improved the quality of the product. The women also improved the quality of the handbags sold to the Field Museum store. For the second order, for example, the women made more uniform size bags, with a lining and a plastic zipper. As of 2014, the Field Museum store has continued to purchase handbags from the Pisqui River communities.

The main obstacle for the handbag project, however, has not been the quality of the product or the demand. Rather, it has been the difficulty of ensuring that CIMA, as the manager of the park conservation efforts, could continue to provide support and capacity building in a way that empowered the women. CIMA’s constraints lay principally with financial difficulties and the remoteness of the Pisqui region, both of which meant that the extension staff could not visit the communities and continue to reinforce the processes of planning, managing budgets, and strengthening organizational capacity. Still, at the end of 2012, when our project ended, CIMA had registered the women as formal artisan organizations with the national agency that regulates these activities. Registration will facilitate the export of the handcrafts. Additionally, CIMA was working to position the handcrafts on the urban market in Peru through facilitating participation of the women in national trade fairs in Iquitos, the regional capital.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that collection building in the Pisqui River Shipibo communities should be viewed in the

larger context of the environmental conservation efforts that stimulated the process. The act of collection led to an expanded effort to engage the Shipibo in conservation efforts and to uphold the worth of their handcrafts as a counter to the discourse of poverty and primitivism that characterizes national portrayals of their lifeways.

The social asset mapping and other participatory research strategies we used demonstrated that the subsistence-oriented ways of life that anthropologists have classically documented remain remarkably resilient in the face of market pressure to do away with them. We found that the autonomy and tranquility that this mode of livelihood affords, continues to be valued despite the constant barrage of negative commentary it receives from those external actors (including those pushing extractive activities, government officials, and urban citizenries who remain unaware of Amazonian lifeways). We also found that the subsistence mode of livelihood creates a profound attachment to place and underlies the continued practices through which Amazonian peoples have managed natural resource use. Weber, Morales, and Mujica (this volume) used archaeological and historical data to demonstrate the continuities and changes in Shipibo lifeways and material production over a span of centuries. Given what we found, it seems clear that the Shipibo people have persisted in maintaining their knowledge of place and cultural practice. This way of life is expressed materially in the production of ceramics, textiles, and other objects of everyday use. The importance of these objects for sustaining this livelihood cannot be understated. Although individuals may come and go from the Pisqui River communities, as long as craft making continues, it will continue to build attachment to place and to Shipibo cultural identity.

The inclusion of these objects in the collection, together with the ethnographic context provided by the documentary films (both the Tschopik footage and *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*), provides an avenue for more effective engagement with indigenous communities around natural resource management and maintenance of cultural autonomy. The collection-building strategy documented here, works to build collaboration and facilitate the continued vibrancy of cultural practices that inform and make possible the manufacture of the artifacts. Building a collection with this purpose transforms museum practice, providing for more multifaceted and participatory forms of collection building and representation. Our hope is that in this way, the act of collecting, so long associated with colonizing practices by Western institutions, is transformed into a practice that rather empowers the source communities as they struggle to confront the challenges to their lands and ways of life.

CHAPTER 4: THE MAKING OF *SHIPIBO: LA PELÍCULA DE NUESTRA MEMORIA* (*SHIPIBO: THE MOVIE OF OUR MEMORIES*)

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Abstract

The chapter discusses the making of *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria* (*Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*) and documents the responses made to the Field Museum's presentation of Tschopik's 1953 film *Men of the Montaña* by community leaders, artists, professors, elders, and schoolchildren in 10 Shipibo villages along the Ucayali and Pisqui rivers, in Pucallpa, and in Lima. The Museum utilized his raw silent footage to allow the Shipibo of today to discuss their sense of indigenous identity and to share knowledge of their traditional ways with each other and with future generations. The chapter interlaces Shipibo commentaries on their cultural heritage and their traditional rituals and ceremonies with quotations from Tschopik's diary, descriptions of his film, and pertinent historical references from the literature.

Resumen

Este capítulo es sobre la realización de *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria*, y la documentación de las reacciones de los líderes de la comunidad, artistas, profesores, ancianos y niños de edad escolar, de diez comunidades shipibo, ubicadas a lo largo de los ríos Pisqui y Ucayali, en Pucallpa y Lima, sobre la presentación del Field Museum de la película de Tschopik's de 1953, *Men of the Montaña*. El Field Museum utilizó las filmaciones originales mudas de Tschopik para que los shipibo de hoy en día compartan el conocimiento de sus tradiciones antiguas entre ellos y con las futuras generaciones. El capítulo entrelaza los comentarios de los shipibo sobre su herencia e identidad cultural y sus ceremonias y rituales tradicionales con extractos del diario de Tschopik, descripciones de su película y referencias históricas pertinentes extraídas de la literatura.

Introduction

The Field Museum has a long history of research and collections building in the Andes-to-Amazon region of Peru. Most recently, as described by Wali (this volume), ecologists and anthropologists have been collaborating on environmental conservation efforts that engage local populations in the management of their natural resources.

In this endeavor, a valuable resource came into play. In 1953, anthropologist Harry Tschopik Jr. (Fig. 4.1) had visited the region to research the exhibit "Men of the Montaña" for the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), and film the Shipibo of the upper Ucayali River (Tschopik, 1954b). A selection of scenes from his expedition was televised in the program *Adventure* on CBS, coproduced by the AMNH in 1954. As part of the show, the journalist Charles Collingwood also interviewed Tschopik about his findings. The balance of his film footage, however, would remain unseen for more than 50 years. With the permission of the AMNH, I created a compilation of Tschopik's film outtakes under the title *El Pueblo Shipibo* (Odland, 2011). In 2007, the Field Museum arranged to present it to Shipibo people in their native communities during our collecting expedition.

Tschopik's images of ceremonial customs and daily life in the flooded forest of the Pisqui and upper Ucayali rivers are a

priceless cultural record for the Shipibo of today, who have few photographs of even their recent past. A group of Shipibo community leaders from Pucallpa and Iparia came to the first screening and reacted with great emotion. One man exclaimed, "Our ancestors weren't stupid after all! Look what we used to know how to do!" (my transcriptions, 2007). William Barbarán González, whose Shipibo name is Pein Sani, from Nuevo Libertador, said, "I think this is a very important document for us. We know the whole history of the Shipibo people in an oral manner. To go back about fifty years and see a documentary like this makes us reflect on how the ancient lifestyle of the Shipibo was. We hope that one day we can count on having this documentary. For us it will be vitally important for the purpose of knowing who we used to be, our customs, our lifestyle, as the Shipibo people here in Ucayali. For we indigenous Shipibo communities, borders do not exist. We are all of the Ucayali River Basin" (my transcriptions, 2007). During the 2007 museum expedition, I recorded Francisca Panchita Linares of Charasmaná as she sang her request:

Now I sing to you from the river landing,
From where you came up the riverbank.
You brought us a beautiful thing,
And we want to have it
To be like them [the ancestors] and of their things.



FIG. 4.1. Harry Tschopik Jr. (1915–1956), associate curator of the American Museum of Natural History and director of *Men of the Montaña*. “Harry Tschopik was an ethnologist interested in material culture and in the relationship between ethnology and archeology, a dedicated museum man with a flair for exhibits and a belief in the mission of museums to take anthropology to the general public, a pioneer student of Peruvian ethnology who trained the first generation of Peruvian ethnologists, and a scholar who stood uncompromisingly for the highest standards of recording and interpretation in anthropology” (Rowe, 1958). With the kind permission of the American Museum of Natural History.

That trip in 2007 made us aware of the significance of the documentary footage. We wanted to honor the wishes of the Shipibo and provide them with a copy that included their commentaries. In May 2008, our team was joined by Nancy Feldman of the School of the Art Institute. In July 2010, the full team grew to include Luisa Belaunde, then of the Universidad Federal de Río de Janeiro; Manuel Dámaso Cuentas Robles of the Universidad Nacional Intercultural de la Amazonía; and Peruvian videographer Fernando Valdivia Gómez. Based on

the comments we received in 2007, I added additional film footage. In 2008 and 2010, we took a better edited, one-hour DVD to 10 native communities (Fig. 1.1) on the upper Pisqui and Ucayali rivers: Caco Macaya, Curiaca del Caco, La Cumbre, Manco Cápac, Pueblo Nuevo, San Francisco de Yarinacocha, San Luís de Charasmaná, Santa Clara (Nuevo Chicago), Santa Rosa, and Yarina.

I recorded, transcribed, and had translated the commentaries from our expeditions in 2007, 2008, and 2010, sometimes from



FIG. 4.2. Three women, probably from the upper Pisqui River, demonstrating embroidering, spinning, and preparing cotton. Photograph captured from film *Men of the Montaña* by Harry Tschopik Jr., 1953. Used with kind permission of the American Museum of Natural History.

Shipibo to Spanish by Peruvian associates and then from Spanish to English. These commentaries, capturing Shipibo people's reactions to the silent-film footage, became the foundation for our documentary. This chapter discusses the making of the resulting film, *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria* (*Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*). To deepen the understanding of the commentaries, I also researched archival records for Tschopik's accounts and diaries held at the AMNH. In what follows, narratives and criticisms from the audiences and informants are interlaced with quotations from Tschopik's diary, descriptions of his film, and pertinent historical references from the literature. The commentaries collected reflect the topics that the Shipibo people chose to discuss. In the process of viewing the first movie and making the second, informants shared their views of their own cultural practices with their children and with outsiders and discussed questions of identity and heritage.

Cultural Heritage and Identity in Everyday Life

The Shipibo possess an emblematic dress and art tradition that uses an elaborate style of patterning called *kené*; the meanings, use, making, and makers of this art are discussed by Belaunde (this volume). Tschopik's film shows every villager wearing the traditional dress, decorated with *kené*, that in some ways has changed very little since 1953. These traditional forms—the women's *chitonte* (skirt), *pampanilla* (shawl), and blouse and the men's *cushma* (tunic)—have not changed, but fibers, manner of fabrication, design motifs, and, most of all, occasions of usage have evolved in the way that fashions do, as people are influenced by new materials, the dress of surrounding people, and the requirements of their changing lives.

But how accurate was Tschopik's documentary? For example, did everyone in a Shipibo community in 1953 dress in traditional, handmade clothes on a daily basis? In his film, every child and every adult is wearing traditional dress: men are shown working in the fields, clearing land, fishing, and building houses while wearing *cushmas* and even elaborate headdresses. Although Tschopik's (1953) diary noted that the chief usually dressed in Western clothes, he said nothing about the average villager, who, one would think, would follow the chief's lead and if possible wear Western dress as well. The chief, he commented, was most helpful in arranging demonstrations of ceramic or textile arts and, one might assume, in arranging for Tschopik to film other events as well.

Tschopik's film portrays women's daily tasks of preparing food and fabricating textiles and ceramics. They are shown cleaning and preparing cotton; spinning; weaving on a back-strap loom and on the harp-shaped, handheld Ucayali loom used in the region; and painting fine *kené* designs on a skirt length, using a splint dipped into a gourd, making the initial lines a darker brownish black. They cook yucca over a wood fire in a ceramic cooking pot covered with banana leaves. They demonstrate coil building, firing, and painting ceramic pots.

The three women in Figure 4.2, an image of regrettably low quality due to its capture from Tschopik's movie, present different styles of traditional dress. On the left, the woman wears a blouse in contrasting colors that was still in fashion in 2010. The *chitonte* she is working on is appliquéd in bold black and white, a style typical of the Pisqui River at the time and no longer worn (my field notes, 2010) (see, e.g., two *chitontes* with comparable designs, Harvard Peabody Museum, Nos. 75888 and 75889). The central woman is spinning cotton and wearing a printed cotton blouse, a fabric that has been supplanted by polyester satin, with a brown dyed, *kené*-painted skirt, also no longer in use. The woman on the right is preparing cotton



FIG. 4.3. Shipibo men in *cushmas* and *maitis*, two with the names of their churches embroidered on the headdress. Manco Capac, upper Pisqui River. 2010. Photo: N. Feldman.

roving for spinning while wearing a worn blouse and a *chitonte* that appears to have been over-dyed black.

Young and old informants agreed that the traditional Shipibo dress was beautiful in the *Tschopik* movie. However, all the women who in our documentary discuss traditional dress rather significantly wore traditional dress, while others in nonspeaking roles did not: young women and other village women in the background wear shorts and T-shirts. Verena Valera Rojas, seen standing on the right in Figure 3.4, whose Shipibo name Kanan Kais means “Designer Woman,” said, “In the old times, our ancestors, our grandparents dressed to feel beautiful. This is how we were; this is how we should be” (my transcriptions, 2007). However, even when they admire the traditional arts, young people cannot be made to dress in a style they see as old-fashioned. In our film, Priscila Maynas Romaina said, “Young girls of today hardly ever wear traditional dress and the young men, never.” Older women in the remote river community of Manco Capac, wearing the *chitonte*, were even more strongly outspoken. In our film, Hilda Amasifuén Picota said,

Our grandparents used to wear this [traditional skirt and blouse], so my mother made me wear it, too. Now we don’t wear the *cushma*, the *pampanilla*, or face paint. Our daughters don’t wear it either. In the future, our daughters are not going to wear this kind of clothing. . . . Our children dress like *mestizos*. The women now even wear pants! Seeing the film we were thinking, our young people are far from appreciating our customs. I advise my daughters to wear traditional skirts because we are not *mestizos*. That’s what I tell my daughters, but they don’t pay attention.

Shipibo women today have a choice of dress, depending on occasion, occupation, status, and comfort. By 2007, the fashion for painted skirts seen in the 1953 film appeared to have given way to embroidered styles. In the upriver communities, nearly all the older women and a few young women wore embroidered skirts with traditional blouses or T-shirts. In urban Lima, Pucallpa, or even the nearby native community of Santa Clara, *chitontes* were almost never seen on young women. Only those engaged in artisan trade or cultural community organizations wore Shipibo dress. Shipibo women travel in Lima or Iquitos outside the native communities wearing their traditional dress in order to represent their culture, to indicate their professional identity as artists, and to market their arts.

All males in the 1953 film, young and old, wore the *cushma*, even while doing the rough work of thatching a house, clearing and burning land, tending to crops, and hunting and fishing. However, *Tschopik* noted in his diary, “The Shipibo are rapidly becoming deculturated. Now the men wear . . . work clothes and go barefoot. The women wear traditional painted skirts and decorative blouses and traditional shawls. [The chief, a] man of about 55 . . . [o]rdinarily . . . dresses in khaki pants, a shirt and goes barefoot” (*Tschopik*, 1953: 3:5:53, 4:6:53). He goes on to hint that he and the chief may have arranged for the community to wear and fully display its traditional dress instead of their customary Western-style clothes. Girard (1958: 234), a near contemporary, noted that men wore Western dress except for the festival attire, which was covered “with drawings.”

Writing about her fieldwork in the early 1980s, Eakin (1986: 19) states that Shipibo men wore Western clothes but would use the *cushma* for special occasions or in the evenings for warmth or for protection from mosquitoes. One woman said that her son in Charasmaná wore the *cushma* she made for him only for warmth, never for special occasions (my transcriptions, 2010),



FIG. 4.4. A Shipibo man aboard a boat wearing a tailored, embroidered shirt. Yarinacocha, 1988. Photo: R. L. Weber.

but a group of young men filmed in 2010 possessed fine *cushmas* and modeled them together (Fig. 4.3). Most of the men we spoke with during our trips wore T-shirts, jeans, and cutoffs and went barefoot or wore old sneakers or rain boots. We did observe that for special cultural events, a man may still wear a fine *cushma* or a Western shirt or vest painted with *kené* designs (see Fig. 4.4).

In our film, dressed in a polo shirt and long pants, Chief Saúl Rojas of Caco Macaya (Fig. 4.5) lamented the impact that missionaries had had on his culture: [Our traditional dress]

“disappeared with the arrival of many religions and with education. . . . We used nose ornaments, and painted our bodies with *huito*, and the way we dressed, they [the missionaries] said they were the devil’s ways, prohibited.”

In Tschopik’s film, only men wore the headdresses, called *maiti*, in a range of styles based on a wide headband that left the crown of the head bare. In our film, José Roque Maynas, an elder of Santa Clara, wore the traditional *cushma* and a similar, feather-trimmed *maiti* while viewing and commenting on the silent-film clips. Observing the men’s traditional dress in



FIG. 4.5. Chief Saul Rojas, contributing to *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*, Culiaca de Caco, upper Ucayali River. 2010. Photo: N. Feldman.

Tschopik's movie in our documentary, he chuckled disapprovingly at the men's contemporary headdresses and said, "This is just exactly right; the clothing, the ornamentation, is all just as it was. This is the traditional style crown; it's woven properly. The custom was for everyone to wear these for festivals in the old days. Now they use embroidered cloth or whatever but it should be woven, and not with the name of the church [Fig. 4.3]—that's very modern, new . . . because these newcomers tell us that we can abandon the customs of our culture."

Schoolchildren wore uniforms to the film screening at their bilingual Shipibo-Spanish school in San Francisco de Yaracocha. Seven children, ages 14 through 17, were selected by their professors for interviews and spoke for our film. Girls wore a gray skirt and white blouse or T-shirt and most boys a T-shirt and dark pants. One boy wore a gold braid pinned to his white dress shirt, representing his high academic achievement. This boy, Igaro Ochavano Rucoba, was the only person we encountered who had ever seen a photograph of his grandparents in which his grandfather wore the *tari* [*cushma*] and held a *macana* club. Another student, Jacqueline Roque said, "Seeing this film was important because it makes me realize how we were before, how we dressed. Above all we are losing our clothing tradition. . . . Many don't want to dress differently, but above all the prettiest designs are those from before."

Shipibo identity in Tschopik's film was also portrayed by face paint and body adornment. His film shows the majority of the adults and children wearing face paint, and his diary offers a few notes about this. The chief of Pao Cocha, for example, goes about "often with his face fully painted in red and black and his bangs slicked down with *genipa*" (*Genipa oblongifolia*) (Tschopik, 1953: 4:6:53). The genus is now known as *Genipa americana*. The painted face designs are much like the *kené* figures applied to textiles and ceramics (see Odland and Weber, this volume) and in Tschopik's film sometimes fill the whole face or lie like a lacey mask across the eyes. Girard, too, visited the Shipibo during the early 1950s and described designs of painted faces, hands, and feet similar to those in Tschopik's film but unfortunately did not photograph them.

Shipibo women paint the upper part of their faces. For celebrations, they usually cover the face completely with geometric figures and dots, done with little splints of bamboo. These are similar to those of their ceramics, textiles, weapons, and other utensils. They also paint their hands and feet with the same type of drawings. The anthropomorphic effigy pots are predominantly feminine, with the sex prominently featured. The face displays geometric drawings similar to those that the Shipibo paint on themselves in times of fiesta. Decoration with dots in a field framed by lines, as the Shipibo and Amahuaca style their face paint. The Shipibo use the specific verb *chachat* meaning "to paint the face with little dots," (my translation) which indicates that this is an ancient tradition (Girard, 1958: 238).

During her fieldwork the following decade, Eakin met women wearing face and body paint, usually black *Genipa* but sometimes also red *annatto*. Heath (Alayza et al., 2002: 18) wrote that on holidays, some women still painted their bodies with fine designs. According to Gebhart-Sayer (1985a: 145), the juice was *G. americana*, and the paint would last four to five days: long enough for the *Anisheati* festival.

Today, the attitudes toward and uses of body and face paint are variable. In Pucallpa, Verena Valera Rojas said, "We used a

cape and wore our faces painted, with feathers above. We all had necklaces, and this was what showed off a beautiful young woman" (my transcriptions, 2007). Either Shipibo or outsiders may admire a beautifully *kené*-painted face, but informants pointed out that the paint serves to indicate ownership and membership. Professor Eli Sánchez Rodríguez said, "Face painting is used only for some ceremonies that have a spiritual orientation. It is not a simple painting; it has a religious meaning, a spiritual meaning, as if to say, 'I am present.' With this, one expresses one's desire to participate in the ritual. . . . They have their hands painted, which distinguishes them as part of the ritual and participants in the ceremony." A woman painting a man's face represented a mark of ownership, as to say, "This man is mine" (my transcriptions, 2010).

Body paint was an important element of a girl's coming-of-age ceremony when, at about 10 years of age, she was initiated into womanhood, or, as the Shipibo described it in my transcriptions (2010), "she was dedicated as a woman." This was often the central part of the *Anisheati*, described later in this chapter in the section "Ritual and Ceremony." This private puberty ritual was not shown in Tschopik's film, but according to women we interviewed, the girl was painted all over her body and legs in elaborate *kené* designs. Inesa Díaz of the native community of Caco Macaya appeared to be about 65 years old when she recounted her experience as a girl for our film: "In those days, we would all dress ourselves with adornments and typical clothes, with the face painted with *huito*. It would be good to see nowadays that our children were dressed traditionally, practicing all of our customs." Other women said that now, however, face painting is practically never done. Hilda Amasifuén Picota said, "I saw that [in the film] in the fiestas women painted their husbands and children, now that is lost, for example I do not know how to make designs on the face. This makes me reflect on how they used to do things, and now we can't do what our ancestors used to do" (my transcriptions, 2010).

Although rare, we did see evidence that people still knew how to do face and body painting. In 2007, for example, we were allowed to photograph one young woman's legs painted in a teardrop pattern in mourning for her sister. During the same expedition, we witnessed a welcoming ceremony in Nuevo Eden on the upper Pisqui River in which a delegation of Canadian petroleum engineers was greeted, each by a pair of young girls in red-painted faces and ceremonial *maiti* crowns, and escorted to an oil concession contract signing. In 2010 in the community of Manco Capac, Sara modeled her *kené*-painted face and legs and demonstrated a nose ornament for our documentary in which she said she painted herself with the herb *huito* or *nane* because her mother and her grandmothers used to do it. On the other hand, none of the schoolgirls interviewed commented on face painting at all.

A much-noted feature of Shipibo body adornment, cranial deformation was traditionally practiced and is shown twice in Tschopik's film. In one view, a baby wears the shaping device tied on the head, and in another, a mother holds up a toddler with an elongated, sloping forehead. Tschopik (1953: 3:5:53) noted, "Almost all have deformed heads and head deformation . . . continues as an active practice." Roe (1982: 39–40) documented Shipibo using the "two short balsa boards wrapped in cotton-filled cloth (*baquë vetánetti*)" in more remote, isolated villages, including some along the Pisqui River



FIG. 4.6. Inesa Diaz, contributing to *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*, Culiaca de Caco, upper Ucayali River. 2010. Photo: J. C. Odland.

in the early 1980s. “That is the practice of cranial deformation that they used to do, differentiating us from other groups, other people. That is the pad they put on the forehead,” one of the participants in a movie audience said, laughing perhaps with some embarrassment (my transcriptions, 2008).

Regarding her 1980s fieldwork Eakin (1986: 20–21) wrote,

Until very recently, the Shipibo practiced cranial reshaping on babies for beautification. Soon after birth, a board and pad were applied to the baby’s forehead with a wide strap around the back of the head. The board remained in place for about three months and was tightened periodically, producing a rounded face and slanted forehead. Missionaries discouraged the practice for years with little result. A more potent deterrent has been ridicule from the outside world. In contemporary culture a Shipibo with a slanted forehead, especially a young army recruit whose short haircut exposes his forehead, is often ridiculed. Consequently, the custom is dying out.

Audiences at our film presentations said the reshaping was used primarily to beautify baby girls. In our film, Priscila Maynas Romaina, who was 48 years old in 2010, told how, as a baby, she narrowly escaped having her skull reshaped. “My grandfather told me that this was our custom. My parents both wanted to put it on me but my uncle didn’t like it, so they took it off. That was our custom back then.” Some older women interviewed in the river communities, for example, Ineza Díaz of Caco Macaya (Fig. 4.6), appeared to have had their heads reshaped. Bernabé Ventura, interviewed on film, who traveled extensively in the Ucayali River basin, said that cranial deformation was used to distinguish a family’s higher social position but that he had not seen it since about 1990. The

practice lost popularity among villages as they came into closer contact with mainstream Peruvian culture.

Women in Tschopik’s film had tied brightly patterned bands, called *jonshé*, around their ankles to make the legs swell attractively. These narrow bands were woven on the Ucayali loom. (For further study of the loom in the Field Museum Collections, refer to FM83005, not shown here). Eakin (1986: 21) and Roe (1982: 39) also noted this practice. It is no longer in fashion, and no one in the audiences commented on it. However, these narrow bands are still produced and sold as bracelets to the tourist trade.

In Tschopik’s film, both men and women wear beaded chest ornaments and beaded collars covering the entire neck, necklaces of many old silver coins or metal disks, and lip and nose ornaments, whether working or feasting. (For further study in the Field Museum Collections, see FM242505, not shown here). Tschopik’s diary (1953: 3:5:53) noted that in the river communities, “most still have nose and lower lip perforated for silver ornaments.” Eakin (1986: 20) also noted people wearing the nose ornament but commented that the lip ornament was less often seen.

Several La Cumbre community members wanted to speak about the nose ornament, called the *reshó*. Juan Ochavano said that he stopped wearing it when he was about 66 years old but at age 75, in 2007, he retained the piercing. The round metal ornament was strung on threads through a pierced nose to catch the light at fiestas, and both men and women, especially young women, used it. “It got them to marry sooner,” he said (my transcriptions, 2007).

In my transcriptions (2007), Panchita Linares, a La Cumbre woman of about 45 years, demonstrated for us how to wear the *reshó*. She did not want to sell the ornament, and one might assume therefore that she was still using it. Florinda Cardenas Linares (about 60 years old in 2007) did wish to sell her lip



FIG. 4.7. Shipibo ceramic vessel used for storing beverages, such as *masato*, collected by Borys Malkin in Colonia Calleria, Loreto, Peru, in 1961 and received in 1962 as part of Accession 2771. See also Figure 4.8 of the same object. 70 cm in diameter × 46 cm high. Photo: Sarah Rivers

ornaments, or *kuri*, and demonstrated how the carved metal pieces fit neatly into the otherwise indiscernible piercings in her lower lip. Sara of Manco Capac modeled the two lip ornaments as well as the *kené*-painted face and legs for the documentary. The big, square chest pieces of tiny beads and beaten coins that Tschopik and Eakin referenced seemed to now be reserved for ceremonial events or for sale to tourists.

Contemporary potters spoke in our documentary about the meaning of their traditional ceramics and its importance to their culture, produced using the same methods shown in Tschopik's film. (Methods and important traditional forms are illustrated and discussed in Odland and Weber (this volume). Celestina Amasifuén, a potter in Manco Capac, described and demonstrated some of her methods. In our film, she and her grandchildren chop down a tree in the nearby jungle and carry the heavy wood back to the village to burn the bark. Its ashes would be ground with a stone and mixed to temper the clay. Sunny weather was necessary. "To make a pottery piece I need two weeks: one week to prepare it and another to paint it. And now it's ready to be fired." She pointed to a big pot with large-scale figures, a *mahueta* for brewing *masato* beer (For examples, see Figs. 4.7–4.9). The Museum purchased several pots or *tinajas* painted in *kené* figures from Sara Ruht Urias Roman from Manco Capac. In our film, she explained the red and black designs of her biggest pot: "What I like about this one is the painting; the drawing is like the roads that you might take, the paths of life. [The designs represent] knowledge that our ancient

mother-ancestors left us. What they knew was much more than all their drawings can tell us."

Simple effigy pots, called *chomo*, like those shown in Tschopik's film, may have a second bowl placed above the body form of the base, or large, elaborate ones may have faces painted or sculpted onto the bowl (Fig. 4.10, FM284544). Since 1993, the government of Peru has sponsored awards for excellence in art, presenting First Prize for Great Masters of Peruvian Craftsmanship to Petronila Cauper of Caco Macaya in 2009 (Fig. 4.11), (for a description of this award, see Feldman, this volume). The prize-winning effigy pot was elaborately shaped and painted, with a large spherical base, a wide neck, and at the top a woman's face. Cauper was interviewed in her thatched, open house, barefoot and dressed traditionally but with her two gold medals on wide ribbons around her neck. In our film, she said, "I felt very proud of myself, because no other Shipibo has received a medal like this. They gave me the first award in Lima and the second in Pucallpa. The *chomo*, the biggest pot [an effigy pot] with the woman's face, I won first prize with that one, and it was sold and taken to Spain." These complicated and highly decorated pots, Cauper said, might take three weeks to make.

Her daughter, Delia Cauper, demonstrated an extremely elaborate *joni chomo* that she said would express all her skills: a large and complicated form, with a spherical base changing to square at the neck and sculpted with two children clinging to their mother (Fig. 4.11). It is painted in elaborate *kené*,

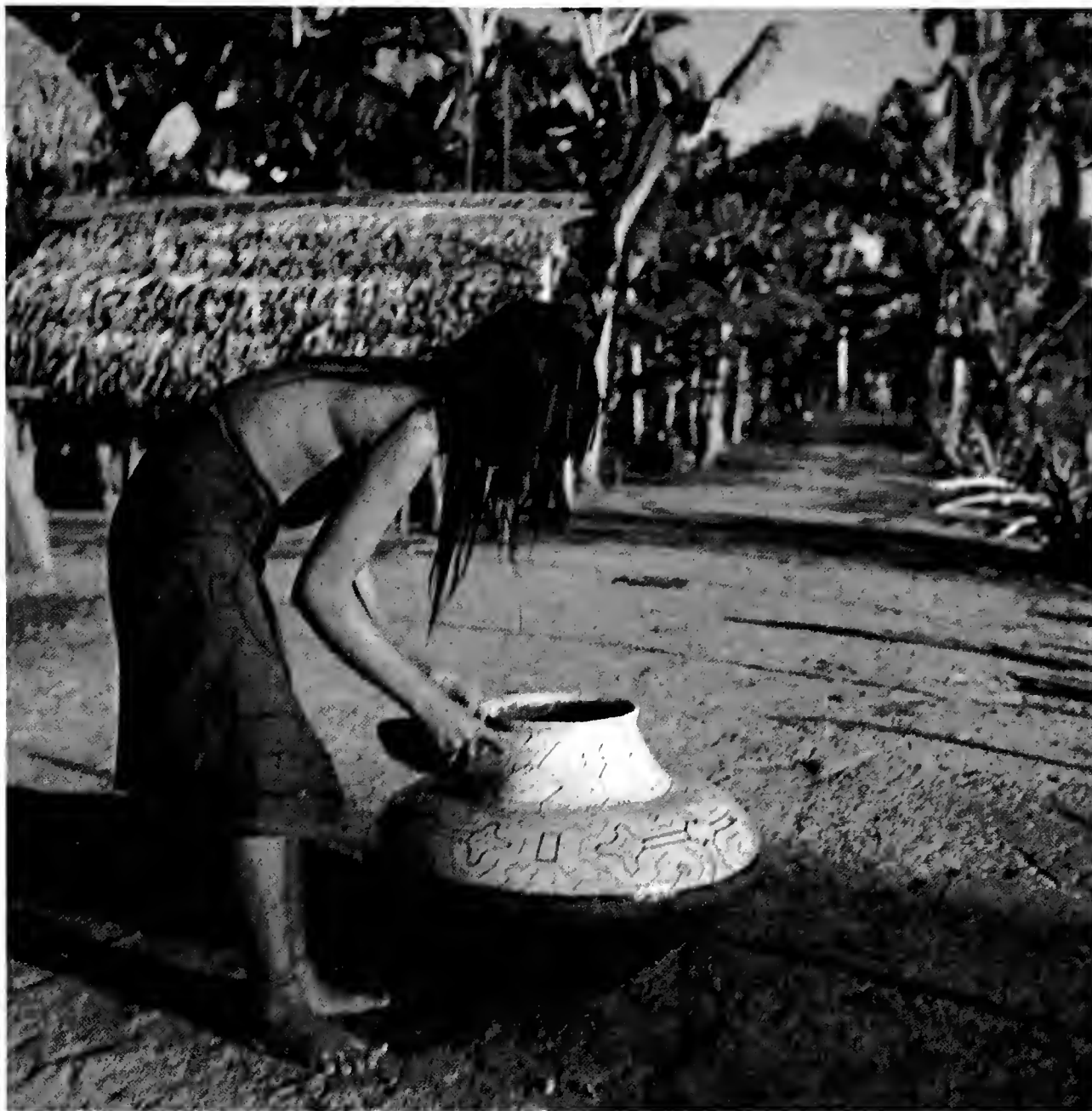


FIG. 4.8. Shipibo woman polishing ceramic vessel, FM242544. Colonia Calleria, Loreto, 1961. See also Figure 4.7 of the same object. Photo: Borys Malkin

burnished, and highly glazed with the local plant-based resin. In our documentary, the potters lamented the impending loss of this artistic tradition; in Celestina Amasifuén's community of Manco Capac, only three women practiced the art, and no young people wanted to learn. She said, "When I die, there will no more of this art. In thirty years there will be no more artisan work."

Martín Ccorisapra, a collector and ceramics historian who accompanied us for the making of the documentary, described the *kené* on pottery as the energy fields surrounding all beings and objects, represented in three dimensions and symmetrically organized around a cross motif. In the film, he states, "With ayahuasca, what the artists paint is like vibrations, the energy that each living thing has. They also apply this vibration to the cross, so that for them every animal has a vibration or an energy and the cross also has this energy and that's why they show the *kené* like this." (For further study in the Field Museum Collections, see *mahueta*, FM341727, not shown here.)

Households visited in 2007–2010 were no longer using pottery vessels; metal pots are more durable for cooking. Even in the Cauper house of two extremely fine and productive potters, cheap metal, plastic, or china plates were used at the everyday table. The schoolchildren in San Francisco interviewed in our documentary were not familiar with how traditional pottery was made and said that although their culture had so many

valuable things, such as textiles, painting, and pottery, they did not understand the *kené* designs.

Ritual and Ceremony

The Shipibo call the *Anisheati* the festival of festivals, encompassing as it does all the major rituals and ceremonies of their culture. Informants explained the scenes as Tschopik's film showed the arrival of the guests, the *masato* toasts, salutations and challenges, strength contests, the punishment of the adulterer's knife, the girl's puberty ceremony, the animal sacrifice, the feast, and a song. Many of these component rituals involved bloodletting to reinforce community identity. In the second round of editing the Tschopik footage, I put the sequences in order as best as possible with the help of Ronald L. Weber and members of different Shipibo communities.

Also known as the *pishta*, the *Añi Xeati*, or the *anishiyacu*, preparations for this festival took a year and a half or two. Saúl Rojas, chief of the community of Caco Macaya, remembered attending two *Anisheati* festivals as a boy when he lived in Nueva Olaya in the lower Ucayali and explained the elaborate requirements (my transcriptions, 2010). The host family began by clearing and burning a new field to grow the yucca needed to



FIG. 4.9. Hosts and guests at an *Anisheati*. A woman dips *masato* beer from a large painted pot, serving it to two groups of men in different styles of *cushmas* and headdresses. By their dress, the location is probably on the Pisqui River, and the group in the long *cushmas* is the host group. In the film, they raise both their drinks and their *macana* clubs and shout in salutation. Photograph captured from the film *Men of the Montaña* by Harry Tschopik Jr., 1953. Used with kind permission of the American Museum of Natural History.

brew the *masato* beer, men captured a baby animal in the mountains to raise for ritual sacrifice, and they built a new house 20 meters long. Host and guest women made and painted new ceramic brewing pots, or *chomos*, and serving bowls, and they wove, painted, and embroidered festival clothing, including a special *cushma* for the man chosen to sacrifice the animal. Saúl Rojas said the custom of the *Anisheati* was no longer practiced. It was, he said, first prohibited by the first evangelical missionaries and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (my transcriptions, 2010). SIL was founded in the United States in Arkansas in 1934 and in 1949 established a base at San Francisco de Yarinacocha (<http://www.sil.org>).

The elder José Roque Maynas, shown as a young man in Figure 4.12 and 66 years old in 2010, was an experienced informant for other anthropologists, including Lathrap, Myers, Loy, and Weber (Weber, 2007). His father-in-law, Catalino, appeared in the film in the fishing scene and was an informant to Roe and others. He identified the location of Tschopik's film at two sites: the fishing scene was shot in Yarinacocha and the balance on the Pisqui River, agreeing with Tschopik's journal (Tschopik, 1953). He noted that some events of a traditional *Anisheati* were either missing from my edited version of the Tschopik footage or out of order. In other moments in our film, José Roque Maynas was enthusiastic about it. He strongly approved of the men's full traditional dress: "*Estos somos nosotros, así eran nuestras costumbres*. We are these people; these were our customs."

Informants agreed that much of Tschopik's film of the ritual was correct but remarked that timing it for the arrival of an anthropological expedition would have been unlikely. Only when all the arrangements were complete and the *masato* ready would the invitations go out, carried in canoes by host men with pots of *masato* to guests' river landings. Here, they were greeted

with more *masato*, and the drinking would begin. When guests would arrive at the fiesta, more *masato* was served, and the strength challenges began (my transcriptions, 2010).

In an image of unfortunately low quality due to its capture from Tschopik's movie, men raise their heavily decorated *macanas*, shouting greetings and challenges (Fig. 4.7). Audiences in Santa Rosa in 2007 explained the scene: "The man or the majordomo who carries the staff, when he's done drinking the *huarapo* or the *masato*, he will say '*je, je, je*,' as a sign that the drink was well-prepared, and that now it will have the effect of making the guests drunk. After that, they all begin to shout '*je, je*' but now in order to find someone to challenge to fight. Look there, now they are testing their strength with the staff, to fight later" (my transcriptions, 2007).

In our documentary, Bernabé Ventura explained how the *macana* battles were just part of a larger picture: "To demonstrate the skills of each man or woman, women competed with their arts, and the men battled with the *macana*, win or lose, and like a contest, like a natural law that is not managed by families, by clans; whoever wins is the conqueror." Men struck at each other with the clubs, while the women ran in to try to grab the clubs with their shawls and keep the men from doing too much damage. But as Chief Rojas said, "Sometimes they killed each other; that's the fiesta." Women fought each other as well, including informant and textile artist Priscila Maynas Romaina, who said in our film, laughing, "Sometimes when a man goes off with another woman, then his ex-wife looks for a way to make him leave the new woman. Then she would fight her, because the stronger woman wins the man, just like that. I fought once but no more. Yes, I won."

In the documentary, the schoolteacher Eli Sánchez Rodríguez offered a more spiritual explanation of the club battle as a strengthening of the whole community:



FIG. 4.10. Shipibo ceramic vessel collected by George L. Cole and his son Fay-Cooper Cole around 1900 and received from Northwestern University in 1981. 30.5 cm in diameter × 30 cm high. Photo: S. Rivers, © The Field Museum, CL0000_284544_FrontAngle.

All the leaders of the different family groups organized the *Anisheati* or the *pishta* festival, and for everyone, men and women, it was important to be strong, *Koshi joni*, in the sense of strong in spirit and strong in body. That way we felt the strength of the family. Arriving at the fiesta, everyone drank *masato*, and saluted each other by raising their clubs. That is the harmonious opening of the fiesta, the raising of the clubs and shouts of greeting that both sides gave. As a sign of brotherhood, the strongest had to test each other, and show off their skills and abilities, so, the men challenged each other and the women went against each other too. In the end, nobody is the strongest because everyone is strong!

Following the ritual battle with their decorated *macanas*, in Tschopik's film, two men fully adorned in *cushmas*, bracelets, face paint, and nose ornaments engage with the "adulterer's knife:" a small curved knife called the *weshati*. (For further study in the Field Museum Collections, see FM338478, not shown here.) In this scene, one man punishes another man, presumably for an extramarital affair, by cutting his head behind the ear, and substantial, ceremonial bloodletting

follows. Informants Juan Ochavano of La Cumbre and Francisca Panchita Linares of Charasmaná on the upper Pisqui River said that if you found your wife with another man, he knew that you would be going to hit him. Then you would go to the fiesta, fight him there, and let "a lot of blood flow" (my transcriptions, 2007).

Roe discusses the *macana* and *weshati* fighting, crediting the need for the fighting to the "fairly continuous philandering of men and the receptivity of married women," and resentment building up into hostility and revenge. It was culturally expected to acquiesce to being punished, or else the hostility would last for years. However, the *weshati* could also be poisoned and cause serious injury or even death. Chief Saúl Rojas described the developments, and, interestingly, his story tallied practically word for word with Roe's (1982: 98–108) published description.

Other informants agreed. If a man made off with another man's wife, was caught stealing, or broke any social contract, the guilty man had to yield his head for cutting, both to prove that he was macho and to remain a member of the community. Other informants discussing the *weshati* referred to it as a tradition of the recent past. The elder José Roque Maynas recalled in our documentary an uncle, dead "only a year," who had a collection of scars, so one can assume that these head cuts



FIG. 4.11. Ceramic artists Delia (in front) and Petronila Cauper, contributing to *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*. Caco Macaya, upper Ucayali River, Peru, 2010. Photo: N. Feldman.

did not act as a serious deterrent to adultery. One must wonder whether a grandly scarred head was actually a badge of virility.

The local treatment for the cut was *piripiri* herbs or boa fat. “Once the cut scarred over, on the next *Anisheati*, a man might go off and do the same thing again, and then submit to the very same punishment.” However, spilling blood so visibly seemed to diffuse hostility. “Resolving the conflict this way they calm down not just the two men but also their families. The very act of seeing blood is calming,” Bernabé Ventura said in our film.

Tschopik’s diary (1953: 3:5:53) notes, “All [men] own *cushmas*, bracelets, beaded collars which they produce on state occasions, as well as the short crooked “adulterer’s knives” which all wear about their necks when dressed up.” Despite this comment, none of these knives is worn visibly in his film. According to Girard (1958: 247), the *Wisati* (*weshati*) handle was covered with geometric figures and was always carried. School children at the bilingual school of San Francisco said that their fathers no longer owned the *weshati*. They had heard about these ritual fights, but they had never seen them and were upset by the fighting and bloodletting on the film.

Their teacher Eli Sánchez Rodríguez explained in our documentary, noting the difference between the formal laws of Peru and the traditions of the native communities: “Now

these things horrify us, they frighten us! Look what they used to do! How awful! So it’s very hard for kids today to understand the old ways.” Still, he pointed out, the *weshati* fight was an effective form of conflict resolution. “If we agreed about it, I believe it wouldn’t be hard to live by those traditional rules. But we have disconnected ourselves from these cultural beliefs, and the old ways are gone.”

Part of the *Anisheati* celebrated a girl’s puberty ritual. Tschopik’s film showed the public portions of this ceremony: the circular *mashá* dance and the haircutting, called the *Běstëti Shréati* or “scissors cutting,” where they cut the girl’s bangs and change her clothing and adornments. Roe (1982: 40) presents an extensive study of the origins and symbolism of the girl’s puberty ritual: “This was a major ceremony, which lasted for three days and involved much drinking of *masato* (lightly alcoholic manioc beer), dancing, singing, and fighting.” While he notes an operation on the girl’s genitals, other sources disagree as to exactly what was cut (see Mújica and Morales, in Alayza et al., 2002: 29; see also Belaunde, this volume). Because there is so much controversy about this procedure, it is possible that there were considerable historic and regional variations.

Audiences in Santa Rosa commented on the puberty ceremony simply from a musical viewpoint. Today’s children,

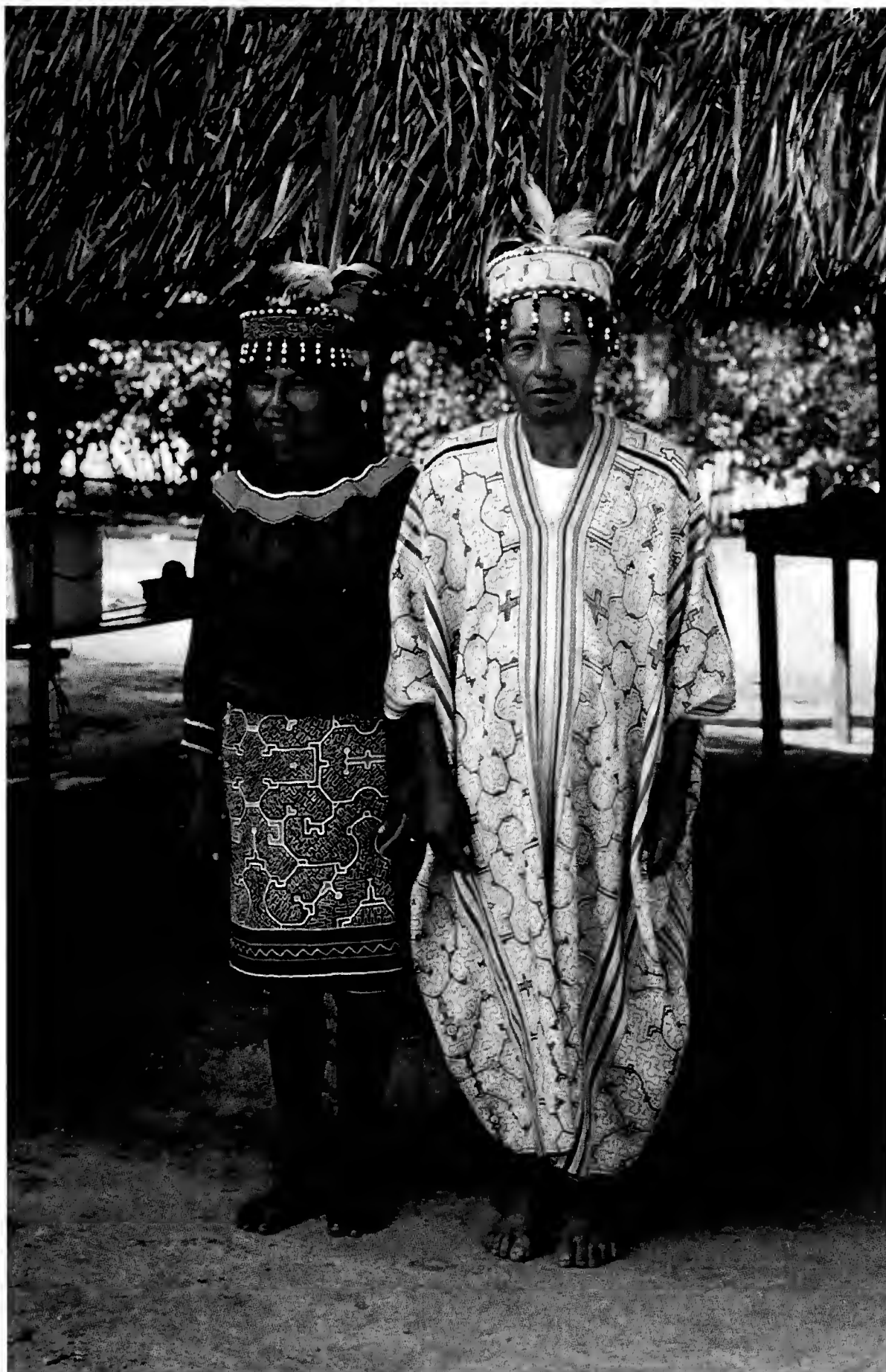


FIG. 4.12. José Roque Maynas and his wife, Juana Cumapa Rengifo, dressed for a special occasion in 1995. Juana is wearing a finely embroidered *chitonte* or skirt made of commercial black cloth. José is wearing a white *tari* or *cushma* decorated with painted black *kené* designs. Photo: R.L. Weber

they said, only want to dance “crazy music, and they don’t even understand it.” They concluded, simply, that from today on, the girl could step out to dance with the other women, and they sang the following song (my transcriptions, 2007):

We have finished the arrangements.
 We have finished the arrangements.
 We have beautified the girl.
 We have beautified the girl for a new life.

It was difficult to address the puberty ceremony directly, possibly due to the presence of male translators and camera

crew. Only women were ever allowed to witness this practice, which was done in private with close adult female relatives to perform the procedure and care for the girl. Inesa Diaz of Caco Macaya (Fig. 4.6) spoke on camera, sitting on a mat, and rubbing her leg in a way that was suggestive of some painful memory, but it was impossible to discuss the procedure directly. After midnight, she said, when the girl was thoroughly intoxicated with *masato*, her mother would sing this song to encourage her to be strong and brave. The following song was recorded and transcribed in 2010:

ato yame oshankin yamè
 Rechanpo, rechanki
 Tson noi bakebo
 Ikin, ikinbano.
 Go to sleep tonight
 Clitoris, clitoris,
 Whose is it, beloved daughter?
 I am with you, I will be with you.

Hilda Amasifuén Picota recalled her older sister's haircutting at an *Anisheati*, with the sacrifice of a deer that they had raised, but she did not remember any operation on the genitals. One might think that had there been a radical procedure, she would have remembered hearing something about it from her older sister. She added, "Later it wasn't good for us to do all of this, but our ancestors thought that it would keep us from having extra-marital sex. But I think that the genitals were mutilated for jealousy" (my transcriptions, 2010).

In Tschopik's film, the animal sacrifice follows the strength contests, the fights, and the puberty ritual. Little boys shoot arrows at a chicken that is tied by the foot to a *kené*-painted Shipibo cross. A group of women with painted hands and feet drag a domestic pig to the cross and tie it up, although, as informants pointed out earlier, the proper animal should have been a wild one, taken from the jungle when small and home raised. In our documentary, the elder José Roque Maynas laughed at the scene: "They didn't really used to sacrifice domestic pigs, but wild pigs and birds and sometimes monkeys. The monkey wasn't so popular, because it's like a human being. When they shot arrows at it, it tried to protect itself. So sacrificing a monkey isn't very good. But the other animals were fine. Everyone enjoyed it and laughed because it's *Anisheati*. Moreover, if anyone sacrificed a chicken, everyone would laugh at him; we preferred to have the sacrifice be of an animal from the jungle, not from the farm. We did not sacrifice animals like this pig." Men wearing decorated *maiti*, beaded chest ornaments, chin ornaments, and with dabs of feathers stuck on their faces, shoot arrows at the pig until it falls. The women finish it off, beating it with clubs; they butcher it and cook it into a "*beten*," a stew of bananas, corn, and meat. In Tschopik's film, the stew was served communally, with women and men eating in separate groups seated on mats, from shared bowls, using their hands. Informants appeared to feel embarrassed by this and several carefully explained that in old days, they did not have spoons or forks.

Conclusion

What aspects of Shipibo culture shown in Tschopik's film occasioned the most audience discussion? In my transcriptions in 2007, 2008, and 2010, people spoke most frequently about the *Anisheati* and about Shipibo identity. Elders felt the loss of the customs they used to love. José Roque Maynas hoped to organize a full *Anisheati* and film all the proper preparations of an entire two-year production so that future generations would know the correct ritual. Ceramic artists feared that their traditional art would end with them since young people were no longer interested in learning or practicing these crafts. They spoke of the changes they have experienced in their environ-

ment and of the need for and value of education for their children.

Population growth has triggered changes in traditional customs and sources of food supplies, and resources of fish and game have become depleted. Uncontrolled development and road building have brought waves of invasive migrations of loggers, poachers, and poor settlers from highland Peru and from Brazil. Hunting with blowgun and dart is long past. Eakin (1986: 2) dated the latest usage of the blowgun to the 1950s. It had a romantic appeal to some schoolchildren, however. "For me, it would be better to live like our ancestors did, by growing their own food and hunting. Now see how our environment is contaminated," the student Lucas Angelo Valera Rodríguez said in our film.

The large fish caught in Tschopik's film drew many envious comments on their size and availability. Professors at the school in San Francisco de Yarinacocha commented in our documentary that increased population has changed the environment of both the rivers and the land, and a traditional way of life was no longer viable. Abundant fish—big, choice fish—have disappeared, and life now requires money, said Haroldo Inuma Macedo (my transcriptions, 2010).

In the old days, audiences said, there was more collective work done, and the community shared meals. Women worked on their ceramics and textile arts together in family groups. Men felled trees, cleared land, and built houses together. Group fishing was done with *huaca* or *barbasco*, a native drug that stunned the fish in a huge harvest that provided protein for a whole community. Tschopik's (1955) article "Filming the Jungle Fishermen" described this bountiful catch in detail.

These days, men feel the necessity to leave the community for outside work in order to have cash for things they did not need before. Eli Sánchez Rodríguez said in our film,

Before, we didn't lack anything, we didn't lack vitamins, we didn't need pharmacies, and there was food on the table. And this other culture, the missionaries and religious people told us, but they do not know, they made us believe, that to drink *masato* was a diabolical thing. Or the *Toé* ceremony [a narcotic prepared from a species of *Datura* and used by shaman to produce visions similar to those of *ayahuasca* (Roc, 1982: 125)] or fishing with *huaca*: they may say it is poison, but for us, it's not! Now, [to feed our families] we have to bring in chicken, things from town or even more difficult.

The influences and pressures of outside cultures and the sense of modern progress continue. The native communities in 2010 had basic local schoolrooms and a visiting health service provided by the national government of Peru. Some had a community telephone connection built by Spain and connected by satellite. A young man was designated by the chief to make or answer the extremely rare call and announce it over the village loudspeaker, all of which required a gasoline-powered electric generator to operate and local money for fuel. Some communities had a television monitor connected by satellite dish and, when fuel was available, powered by the generator for special events, such as the 2010 World Cup. Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Inca Cola, and packaged snack products had begun to reach the Ucayali villages though not yet those of the upper Pisqui (my field notes, 2007, 2010).



FIG. 4.13. Schoolgirls Ficcía Agustín, Jakelyn Juana Roque Valles, Nilda Valera Cumapa, and Rocío del Pilar Yui Inuma, contributing to *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*, San Francisco de Yarinacocha, middle Ucayali River, Peru, 2010. Photo: N. Feldman.

Most informants thought that modern education was vital for a promising future for their children. In our film, Priscila Maynas Romaina, the textile artist whose three children are finishing the university, expressed the hope that improved education would result in more Shipibo professionals, mayors, lawyers, and eventually members of Congress. Bilingual education was available at the Universidad Nacional Intercultural de la Amazonía, opened in 2000 and dedicated to indigenous Shipibo-Conibo students, and at the primary and secondary schools, such as that of San Francisco de Yarinacocha, where boys and girls recorded their comments. In addition to typical school subjects, boys there learned how to cultivate yucca, bananas, and animal husbandry and no longer knew how to fish or hunt. The student Igor Ochavano Rucoba said in our documentary, weighing modern versus traditional life, “But even now the Shipibo way of life still exists in the upper Ucayali [River], not so much in San Francisco so close to the city of Pucallpa—[here] we can’t practice so much, or maybe we are forgetting the traditional ways. I felt a little sad because the houses they lived in were just made of leaves and not safe; our houses are more modern. It might have been nice to live as they did, but life today is nice.” Boys now preferred their *masato* chilled and thought today’s music much better than the songs of 1953. In our film, the student Lucas Angelo Valera Rodríguez wanted the documentary to be screened on Lima Channel 2 TV because it had “the highest ratings” and because “people would be surprised by the video, how it shows things no one has ever seen. It may rescue our culture, and make it more popular, our beautiful culture.”

In their bilingual school, children also learned some of their ancestors’ art and dances. The girls said that they continue to

value their language, textiles, ceramics, dress, and food (Fig. 4.13). Students Ficcía Agustín and Jakelyn Juana Roque Valles planned to continue their studies to “make our families proud. Some of our families do not have much money, but they work for us and we will work for them. . . . We will preserve our Shipibo culture, keep it from being lost. We make artisan work to help ourselves and to preserve it.” This is not always easy, Agustín said: “Some people are ashamed of being Shipibo. They don’t speak their own language and don’t identify with their own culture.” In our documentary, the student Rocío del Pilar Yui Inuma summarized the feeling of most of the audiences: “It is important to recover our culture, and practice it, because if tomorrow we were to lose it, then what would become of us? That’s why we must reclaim our customs and our beliefs. Wherever we go, we should identify ourselves as Shipibo and be proud of our culture. To belong to a Shipibo community means a lot to us, it is important.”

The names of all the elders, artists, community leaders, schoolchildren, and participating communities are listed in Appendix II. The movie premiered at the modern José Ignacio Aguirrezabal Municipal Library in Pucallpa in July 2011, with many of the informants attending as well as leaders of indigenous organizations. The completed production is available in Spanish and Shipibo with Spanish subtitles and with English subtitles. The DVD containing both *El Pueblo Shipibo* and *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria (Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories)* has been screened on Peruvian national television and distributed to the native communities, indigenous and human rights groups, and the educational system and museums of Peru.

CHAPTER 5: EVOLVING COMMUNITIES: ASPECTS OF SHIPIBO AND ANDEAN ART, TEXTILES, AND PRACTICE IN CONTEMPORARY PERU

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Abstract

Textile art in contemporary Shipibo and Andean cultures functions as symbol and document of cultural continuity, generating new signification as form, pattern, and design, often serve to visually unify evolving indigenous communities. This chapter explores how artists, working with both traditional and new forms of art, increasingly participate in more diverse urban communities that include local, national, and international social and cultural networks. Through this work, we can see how both visual arts and design can drive cultural, political, and economic awareness of indigenous communities in urban centers of Peru.

Resumen

El arte textil en las culturas shipibo y andina contemporáneas funciona como un símbolo y documento de la continuidad cultural, generando una nueva significación como forma, patrón, y diseño, que por lo general sirve para visualmente unificar a las cambiantes comunidades indígenas. Este artículo explora como los artistas, que trabajan en formas de arte tradicional y nuevo, participan cada vez más en comunidades urbanas muy diversas que incluyen redes culturales y sociales locales, nacionales e internacionales. Por medio de este trabajo podemos observar como las artes visuales y el diseño, pueden hacer que los centros urbanos del Perú se sensibilicen con la situación cultural, política y económica de las comunidades indígenas.

In the mid- to late 20th century, before advancements such as cell phones, the Internet, and global transportation systems, the rain forests of the Peruvian Amazon, its undulating river systems, and the many peoples of Amazonia and its territories were considered remote and isolated. Contact between the Shipibo-Conibo and other indigenous communities in the Amazon and elsewhere in Peru was restricted by the difficulty of travel to these regions and the lack of communication systems. The vast Amazon territories welcomed few travelers and explorers.

However, rapid changes have occurred since the 1990s. Travel to remote regions of the Peruvian Amazon may still require two to three days by motorboat, but there are now many more boats, more planes, and more travelers. Now, Shipibo villages often have generators to project movies, play music, and power cell phones. New social networks for indigenous representation exist with major national organizations to support community vitality and political, social, and economic communications, such as the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDESEP) (for a full description of this organization, see Wali, this volume; see also <http://www.aidesep.org.pe>).

Indeed, the ancestral territory inhabited by the Shipibo-Conibo today is a vastly different land than the territory filmed in 1953 by the anthropologist Harry Tschopik for the American Museum of Natural History in New York, whose film was projected for Shipibo communities as part of our fieldwork in 2008–2010 (Odland, this volume; Odland & Feldman, 2010).

Today, there is a growing dialogue about the contributions of the Amazonian peoples, their cultures, and the protection of the Amazonian environment and its resources throughout both the global community and the National Peruvian community. Technology and new social networks have challenged this concept of remoteness, as the race for resources has increasingly transformed all of our landscapes.

This chapter examines Shipibo art, textiles, and design in the greater national context of contemporary indigenous Peruvian textiles by exploring the new, evolving communities of artists whose practices draw on their traditions of community, pattern, and design. These artists increasingly participate in more diverse communities of artistic and craft practitioners in urban centers such as Lima, Pucallpa, and Cusco. Comments reflect selected narratives from research and four fieldwork trips to Peru in the years 2007–2010 to the Andean community of Chinchero in the area of Cusco as well as to Shipibo communities along the Caco, Pisqui, and Ucayali rivers as well as in the cities of Yarinacocha, Pucallpa, and Lima, Peru.

Examining some of the new social networks and artistic traditions and practices of contemporary traditional Andean textile artists provides a context for understanding how other indigenous peoples are negotiating and actively transforming their cultural landscape in the 21st century by drawing on their community's historical strengths and traditions. In the late 20th century, Andean highland textiles, whose traditions draw on their Incan heritage, represented largely native Peruvian textiles in the national arena. Shipibo artists and their works are

increasingly participating in the larger national community of indigenous artistic practices. Indeed, visual representations of Peru's cultural wealth increasingly feature patterns and design representative of not only indigenous communities in the vast Andean mountain range but also the distinctive all-over *kené* patterns of Peru's Amazonian communities (for a full definition of *kené*, see Belaunde, this volume).

Art, whether figurative or patterned, painted, stitched, sculpted, auditory, performed, filmed, or woven, has the power to transform or shift the way in which its viewers and producers engage the world. Its presence is a form of action and discourse by the artists and beholders that raises social and cultural awareness of a minority. Its display in cultural institutions invites dialogue, even though this dialogue is inherently multivocal and often presents layers of multiple meanings for its various beholders (Botha, 2007; Becker, 2007; Meskimmon, 2010). In recent years, one sees a visual expansion of both traditional and new forms of indigenous Peruvian artists' work into cultural institutions in Peru's urban centers.

Investigating the diverse range of some of the current indigenous art practices in the expanded communities of the larger cities of Lima, Pucallpa, and Cusco allows us to begin to consider evolving meanings of Shipibo and Andean pattern and art as well as how their visual design, patterns, and artistic practices activate and shape political, cultural, and economic awareness in both rural and urban centers of Peru.

Cultural Awareness of Indigenous Art in Peru's Urban Centers

Beginning in the 1990s, there has been a shift in the regional, national, and international dialogues about the people and resources of the Amazon. These dialogues have been constructed both by indigenous Amazon peoples and by organizations such as the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest and various cultural, economic, and political entities, as community land and mineral rights of Peru's Amazon are evaluated in social policies. The informed public has begun to understand the cultural wealth of the many diverse indigenous peoples who inhabit the Amazon's vast regions.

Nationally, Peru's government and citizens are debating how to balance and protect the lives of the native peoples and the biodiversity of their Amazon forest home with the larger public and corporate demand for the Amazonian resources of oil, minerals, gas, and timber. The voices of the international community are also diverse in their opinions with regard to protecting the Shipibo peoples' Amazon home: from those who support a postpetroleum civilization, maintaining the vast Amazon forests and preserving existing community land to those who propose extraction of resources and the balancing of indigenous land rights with urban demand for mineral resources (see Wali, this volume). The commitment to protect Peru's Amazon rain forest from environmental degradation is a fragile social construct, and positions continue to be negotiated as international corporations seek and are granted land or mineral rights to indigenous community lands and given the difficulty of monitoring the illegal extraction of trees and implementing safeguards for mineral extraction in remote river regions.

On a positive note, the importance of preserving fragile Amazon resources has begun to penetrate Lima, Peru's cultural capital. In the past decade, Lima's arts communities have actively campaigned for the preservation of the Amazon through designed products and new partnerships with its peoples. During the month of October 2009, the Lima nonprofit group Amo Amazonía presented the *Amo Amazonía Festival Cultural* (I love the Amazon Cultural Festival) featuring performances, films, and art exhibitions calling attention to the plight of the Amazon. In one daylong performance event, a human chain on Lima's beach spelled out the phrase "Amo Amazonía." Harry Tschopik's 1953 footage of Shipibo communities in the upper Amazon basin titled *Men of the Montaña* and compiled into a documentary by J. Claire Odland of the Field Museum under the title *El Pueblo Shipibo* was one of the featured films in this festival.

Today, Amazonian culture has a greater presence in the new trends in fashion, graphic design, visual arts, film, tourism, and food industries. Lima's top chefs have embraced the foods of the Amazon. Chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino has secured a role for Amazonian dishes in Peruvian cuisine with his Lima restaurants Malabar and Ámaz, which include exotic ingredients from the Peruvian Amazon.

In addition, in July 2010 in the streets of Lima's Barranco neighborhood, several top fashion designers, each collaborating with indigenous artists, presented fashion lines incorporating indigenous patterns, designs, and materials. The final runway show, featuring a multisensory display of lights, music, and new fashions, echoed ongoing political, social, and economic dialogues of Shipibo and other indigenous groups as they explore and claim their rights as citizens of 21st-century Peru. April Borda, a Lima-based designer and entrepreneur who accompanied our Field Museum expedition in 2010 to Pucallpa and the Caco River, works with fashion designers and Andean and Shipibo artists and artisans to create designed objects for the Peruvian and international markets. Fashion designs by Anabel de la Cruz incorporate the stitched *kené* designs of Shipibo women from Lima's Cantagallo neighborhood.

Overall, the inclusion and representation of artists and their art and craftwork in the national visual dialogue are part of an evolving social discourse that serves to build and strengthen indigenous communities (various writers have addressed the inclusion of the other into dominant cultural narrative, such as Botha, 2007; Meskimmon, 2010; Varese, 2013; Stevenson, 2014). In addition, this increased visibility in major cities reveals an ongoing social discourse of indigenous concerns, powerfully made visible through the cultural dialogues of art, food, film, and fashion.

The recognition and representation of indigenous cultural contributions to Peru's patrimony occur at the highest state levels. Since 1975, the annual Joaquin Lopez Antay Award recognizes the artistic and socioeconomic contributions of 12 indigenous master Peruvian artists to Peru's dynamic craft market, which earns more than 220 million Peruvian *soles* annually (approximately \$72 million). In 2008, internationally known fifth-generation Andean master tapestry artist Máximo Laura received this award. In 2009, Petronila Cauper, an elder Shipibo ceramic artist from the remote village of Caco Macayo, traveled to Lima to receive this medal from the president of Peru for her large *kené*-covered vessels adorned with sculpted reliefs of female heads (see Fig. 4.11). Other recent awardees



FIG. 5.1. Andean women at Chinchero's cooperative weaving center, 2007. Photo: N. Feldman

identified in an article by Magda Quispe Ch in *La República* on March 22, 2013, included Agripino Palomino Huamán, who creates three-dimensional filigree jewelry in Ayacucho, Peru (2013), and Murayari Asipali Caesar, a wood sculptor of Amazonian water and jungle figures in Pucallpa, Peru (2013).

Pattern in woven, stitched, and painted textiles serves as a visual form to document cultural community knowledge, an approach distinct from that of recording knowledge in written textual form (Belaunde, this volume; Meisch, 1987; Zorn, 1987; Franquemont & Franquemont, 2004; Callañaupa-Alvarez, 2007). Indeed, even the processes and materials used in making textiles and patterns act as a record of community dialogues and interactions that are specific to the location and the environment of the community, whether riverine, mountain, or urban. This embodied knowledge reflects a unique indigenous perspective, as it preserves shared cultural values and aesthetics within the community. In Shipibo-Conibo culture, *kené* designs reveal a framework of pathways through which knowledge, objects, and powers move (Belaunde, this volume).

In traditional Shipibo and Andean textiles, the unique combinations of designs are embedded with both cultural and individual expressed concepts whose meaning is recognized within the community. Other times, the inclusion of abstract, geometric forms into woven designs serve a solely aesthetic purpose. Weavers from the Andean Chinchero community explained that while each woven cloth reveals the maker's community, it is also understood as part of an expression of the weaver's individual worldview (my fieldwork, 2007). The meaning of pattern is enhanced by the signification of the material and the process from which it is made. Each stage of the woven, stitched, or painted process bears significance to the maker and their community, from procuring the raw or

commercially produced materials to spinning the threads to weaving or embellishing the cloth.

Andean Traditional Artists and Their Practice

The preservation of historical materials, techniques, and patterns of Andean textiles has been the work of Nilda Callañaupa-Alvarez, a master Quechua weaver, scholar from Chinchero, and founding executive director of the Center for Traditional Textiles in Cusco (CTTC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving weaving traditions in the Cusco region since 1996. Chinchero has long been known for its community of master weavers. Located approximately 20 miles outside Cusco in the Central Andes region of Peru, it is a small village at an altitude of approximately 12,000 feet that overlooks the Sacred Valley of the Incas.

Ten towns whose weaving traditions Callañaupa-Alvarez found to be endangered now have community weaving centers. As of 2013, the communities of Accha Alta, Acopia, Pitumarca, Chinchero, Santo Tomas, Sallac, Mahuaypampa, Patabamba, and Chahuaytire from the department of Cusco and the Huacatinco community from the Ocongate region have centers that host educational forums for experienced weavers and youth to revive their unique community textile traditions as well as provide collaborative work spaces for textile artists and new venues to market their textiles. A photograph of Chinchero's CTTC weaving center shows women of all ages working collaboratively and individually to design, dye threads, spin, warp, and weave (Fig. 5.1). These community textile traditions draw on ancient Andean concepts of community related to the Quechua term *ayllu*, a principle that reflects openness to the

world and the relationships of nurturance and reciprocity within it. In weaving, one may see it expressed through the sharing of community wisdom and labor within and between communities. The expression of this term in Andean culture reflects the profound feeling of respect and love for the entire living human/natural world (Rivera, 1998; Vasquez, 1998).

In Cusco, the CTTC operates a nonprofit museum and retail gallery representing artists from their 10 weaving communities. Located beside the gardens of Koricancha, the most sacred Incan Temple of the Sun in the center of Cusco, this museum, along with the Inca Museum, curates exhibitions of Incan art, manages sales of contemporary woven textiles, and provides demonstrations of historical textile techniques. The gallery offers demonstration spaces, dormitory rooms, and kitchens for male and female weavers, administrative offices, and archival storage for their textile collection. Workshops exist for weavers to engage in dialogue and demonstrations of traditional but forgotten patterns and artistic practices. Objects such as runners, caps, placemats, and scarves are designed to maximize their economic viability to diverse consumers of Andean textiles in shops in Cusco, in Lima, and internationally via the Internet. The economic rewards from sales results in an increased status for textiles in villages associated with the CTTC attracting new craftspeople to textile production.

More broadly, Callañaupa-Alvarez and the CTTC's efforts to revive Andean patterns and techniques have been enhanced by their efforts to support and revive historical-cultural community structures and practices, such as reciprocal social practices, as seen in collaborative weaving practices in centers and the pairing of experienced elder weavers with youth learning to weave traditional cloth. In symmetrical balance, the provision of collaborative dialogue in public space encourages more weavers to expand their weaving skills and create new signification in contemporary Andean patterns (my fieldwork, 2007; Hanson, 2004). Dialogues of shared indigenous ancestral and traditional processes of dyes, thread, weaving techniques, and patterns strengthen the bonds uniting these communities.

Encouraging collaborative international dialogues between weavers, the CTTC hosts the Tinkuy de Tejedores (Gathering of Weavers Conferences). In 2010, Tinkuy de Tejedores welcomed hundreds of indigenous ethnic national and international weavers, weavers from the contemporary art scene, and textile scholars and historians from Peru and South, Central, and North America and throughout the world. Presentations occur in English, Spanish, and Quechua, the language of the Andes. In November 2013, the second Tinkuy de Tejedores welcomed weavers from India, Laos, the United States, and the Navajo community; Asur and Cochabamba natives from Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, Argentina, and Ecuador; and communities throughout Peru. Unfortunately, no Shipibo weaver has yet attended these conferences. In an e-mail message to the author on November 27, 2013, Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez expressed the commitment to have a Shipibo weaver participate at the next Tinkuy. At Tinkuy 2013, only Machiguenga weavers from southeastern Peru represented the Amazon rain forest.

The Andean community, long perceived as peripheral to the power structures of the urban centers, has, through cultural organizations such as the CTTC, built a vast network of relationships through the medium of textiles that engages social, economic, political, and cultural elements within Peruvian society and in the larger international community through

affiliations from social media, such as Facebook and websites; other international indigenous communities; and nonprofit organizations, such as the Andean Textile Arts. Actions centered on Andean textiles, tourism, conferences, museums, adult and youth education, and economic advancement of CTTC communities creates a new vibrant dialogue fostering the production and exchange of traditional woven cloth.

Product labels attached to weavings sold at CTTC also acknowledge community, as they document the historical woven patterns unique to each village. Labels feature a photograph, the name and birthday of the weaver, the name of the community, the materials, and the traditional function and price of the woven object. Through this information, the buyer, in turn, becomes part of this circle of exchange—appraised and connected to the artistic practice of each artist and their larger community traditions.

Viewers interact with Andean textiles not only through their sense of sight but also through all of their senses, engaging in a visceral relationship between viewer and object. Indeed, through visits to village weaving centers and Cusco's museums, members of Andean communities, tourists, schoolchildren, politicians, scholars, and many other diverse groups experience in a multisensory way traditional Andean textile production practices, such as the processing of natural dyes, spinning threads, warping a loom, and weaving a textile.

These engaged experiences of the community shift the manner in which viewer—now a participant—experiences the product's value. Education links the aesthetics of material, production, and design to cultural value, allowing artists to sell their works at higher prices. Consequently, textiles become a more valued entity, as social, cultural, economic, and political values are elevated not only within the immediate community but also within the greater national and even international communities.

Evolving Communities and the Signification of *Kené*

Our fieldwork among Shipibo communities in the Pisqui and Caco River regions (2008–2010) reveals the persistence of a vibrant craft tradition in several villages. Female artists, both young and old, create ceramic vessels, woven textiles, and embroidered and painted *kené* work. Sometimes, elder female artists noted the more solitary aspect of their practice and their concern that Shipibo textile or ceramic traditions may die out once they are gone. Shipibo elders and leaders expressed their commitment to preserving their cultural-historical traditions.

The open structure of Shipibo homes in the Peruvian Amazon serves as art studios. We were often welcomed to the homes of weavers, embroiderers, and ceramic artists for demonstrations or to purchase objects. In the village of Caco Macayo, Mercedes Gonzales, wearing one of her woven skirts embroidered with *kené* designs, showed us her home and weaving studio, her loom, her prepared cotton roving, and her spun threads assembled for weaving (Fig. 5.2). Using her back-strap loom, she demonstrated weaving plain weave, natural-colored cotton with a polychrome striped pattern in the center and on each edge of the cloth. After this cloth is completed, she will stitch *kené* designs on the skirt.

Ceramic and textile artists rely on strong traditions of reciprocal relationships with community members to assist in



FIG. 5.2. Shipibo weaver, Mercedes Gonzales, in her home with her loom, Caco Macayo, 2010. Photo: J.C. Odland

procuring natural and commercial materials. Mahogany bark, a brown textile dye, is obtained from mountain regions through trade. Logs for ceramic kiln fires are carried from the jungle. Commercially spun thread and woven cloth is procured from cities. In 2010, male leaders and female artists together assessed the value of each finished purse for the Field Museum's fair trade project (Wali, this volume). This sharing of labor (*minga*) reflects the concept of reciprocity and acknowledges the integral role of arts and crafts as benefiting the vibrancy of community and cultural traditions. Stitched *kené* cloth created by village women adorns bodies at festive village occasions, bringing

visual representations of the spiritual communal force of *kené* into village life.

Objects decorated with *kené*, once solely essential parts of ceremonial life, now also exist as aesthetic art made by artists in a system of exchange within the structure of museums, collectors, and tourists in both riverine villages and urban centers. This phenomenon leads to the question, what is the community role of aesthetic objects in Shipibo communities? In addition, as the system shifts from solely ceremonial objects to include objects of trade and aesthetic esteem, crafted objects carefully produced within village settings participate in new exchanges, new systems of value, and new cultural dialogues in

urban centers. How, then, do these objects decorated in *kené* reflect the cultural continuity of their community in contemporary Peru?

The signification of contemporary *kené* design resides in the consistency of its making, its materials, and the manner in which it continues to cover bodies, buildings, and other village and urban objects of aesthetic esteem. *Kené*-decorated ceramic and textile objects maintain the continuity of cultural meaning, even though they function in new ways beyond historical-cultural performed ceremonial use in village life. An object may *function* as an abstraction in addition to its physical utility. M. Anna Fariello states, “Indeed to understand the material aesthetic object—whether art or craft—the meaning of *function* cannot be limited to use alone. Function exists in the realm of the metaphysical, while use can be understood in physical terms . . . while the physical is a point of departure; it is the intangible that gives meaning to the object” (Fariello, 2011: 37–38). Fariello (2011) categorizes the multiple, layered, and abstract intangible meanings of an object as symbol, document, metaphor, ritual, or as talisman. Applying these categories of intangible contributions to the meaning of the aesthetic Shipibo or Andean object, one may consider how the contemporary textile or ceramic object, though less often participating in historical cycles of ceremony, continues to function as a symbol of cultural continuity, a document of community knowledge, a document of cultural pattern and stitch work, a metaphor of the invisible world tied to holistic well-being, a reference to indigenous ritual, and a talisman for spiritual healing.

The ceramicist Delia Cauper from Caco Macayo often works alone in making her large vessels covered in *kené* or with her family teaching her daughters ceramic skills. When she was younger, she worked in groups. Craft and art production often continues as a shared experience through family groups. Textile artists are more likely to stitch in small groups by choice; however, the community structures underlying many past collaborative efforts have shifted. This phenomenon leads to a question at the core of feelings of relative isolation: how do practices of making shift and yet continue to express cultural continuity? Changes have occurred in how *kené* decorated objects are made. While the craft traditions within villages continue to thrive, often there are fewer women creating crafted objects from raw materials found in the jungle. Fewer women are learning to process raw cotton, spin into thread, and weave into cloth, as seen in the current textile practice of Mercedes Gonzales, the Shipibo weaver from the village of Caco Macayo (Fig. 5.2). More often, commercially woven cloth and spun threads are purchased to create stitched *kené* skirts (Belaunde, this volume; Belaunde, 2009; Odland & Feldman, 2010).

Painted and stitched *kené* pattern remains a unifying visual component of the community—it is the abstract visual representation of the ebb and flow and spiritual pathways of community life and learning among the Shipibo—a design element that unites Amazonian communities. In each community, the crafting of *kené* by artists—whether done individually or in collaboration—reflects cultural continuity. Comments by Shipibo people in our fieldwork suggest that some members of their community fear that the commodification of *kené* could detach its traditional meanings. However, pattern, like culture, has a meaning that is fluid, always multivocal, and, indeed, even ambiguous as its meaning shifts over time and space for each viewer and each time and location of its viewed reception.

Overall, Shipibo and other indigenous people embrace *kené* as a powerful and recognizable contemporary symbol of community.

Conversations about the signification of *kené* exist in the parallel world of the cities as more Shipibo people move to the urban centers of Pucallpa and Lima to join other family members and seek employment. As Shipibo artists seek representation, urban cultural systems respond to these evolving communities and provide space in galleries and museums for the display of art and aesthetically crafted objects created by once-remote, now increasingly urban indigenous communities. The urban indigenous artist more often engages in concepts and narratives of their contemporary Amazonian experience. More exhibitions in urban centers seek to represent the cultural patrimony of Amazonian peoples.

Shipibo Artists and Their Practice in Lima and Pucallpa

In November 2013, the Cultural Center of Spain in Lima presented the exhibition “Mujeres de la Floresta” (“Women of the Forest”) curated by César Ramos Aldana. Artwork, both popular and contemporary, of Amazonian women artists from different nations, such as the Shipibo-Conibo, Ashanika, Piros-Yines, Yaneshas, Machiguengas, Haramkbut, and Yaminahua, was represented in various media, such as textiles, painting, performance art, fashion, and basketry. These art forms, exhibited in an urban setting, directly recall the artists’ Amazonian place of birth and culture through their depictions of the *kené*, jungle landscape, mythology, and spiritual relationship between figure and land.

The Amazon jungle surrounds the town of Pucallpa, located on the Ucayali River, a major tributary of the Amazon River. It is the largest city near many Shipibo communities with almost 200,000 people. Its economy features markets for local agriculture, extraction of rosewood oil, sawmills for lumber, and oil refineries. In recent years, many Shipibo have moved to Pucallpa from their riverine communities seeking employment and educational opportunities. Pucallpa has also welcomed other Peruvian nationals seeking employment in energy, building roads, and logging. It is the home of the established Eduardo Meza Saravia Art School, which exposes young artists to a diverse range of new forms and media for the expression of their contemporary experience of Amazonian culture. Abounding with visual representations of Shipibo culture on painted *kené* buildings and in shops filled with Shipibo arts and crafts, Pucallpa is a good example of an urban site that has seen an adaptation of Amazonian cultural and artistic forms.

The invisible, spiritual, and metaphysical world of the jungle, once solely expressed in the abstract symmetrical work of *kené* on ceramics and textiles created by individual artists, is increasingly viewed through the medium of acrylics or oils on canvas and other new media, such as performance, photography, film, and new forms of fiber and multidisciplinary art. Interviewed in July 2010, the artist Graciela Arias Salazar exhibits her paintings in galleries in Pucallpa and Lima. Raised in the jungle near Pucallpa, after fleeing the late 20th-century violence in Ayacucho, she is passionate about preserving Shipibo and Amazonian cultures.



FIG. 5.3. Painting by Graciela Arias Salazar, acrylic on canvas, 2010. Photo: N. Feldman.

Arias Salazar's paintings, acrylics on canvas, draw closely on Shipibo myths. They often depict elements of spiritual healing: the winding anaconda, the piercing eyes of the panther, and colorful birds of the air. In this painting, six figures draped in *kené* cloth participate in a shaman-led healing ceremony in a jungle landscape filled with animals (Fig. 5.3). Her undulating Amazonian landscapes bring forth the mystical and invisible world of the jungle. Arias Salazar discusses her paintings' focus of jungle landscapes, Shipibo myths, legends, and designs: "The jungle is magic, it has stories, legends, and myths and since I was a young child I have been a bit of a dreamer. So, when people told me stories I was hallucinating that they were real. . . . The jungle was already inside of me because I have always loved the landscape, the colors, the dawn, and the dusk" (my fieldwork, 2010).

Arias Salazar and other Amazonian artists, such as Rember Yahuarcani, are active in creating a contemporary Amazon visual narrative. In 2008, Rember Yahuarcani, from the almost extinct Aimenú clan of the Peruvian Huitoto people, showed us his recent work (Fig. 5.4). His painting reveals the dialogue of both presence and agency by indigenous peoples with their territorial lands, their myths and legends, and the healing forces of the jungle.

Speaking about his work in an interview by Pedro Escribano, published in the December 17, 2014, edition of *La República*, Rember said, "My work continues to recreate and be inspired by the myths, legends, and stories of the Huitotos. I believe that

the sheltered memory in the Huitotos cosmogony is the strength to face our future . . . within it lie the answers to our future, so we delve and defend our memory and history which is our lives."

Paintings and stitch work art by urban artists of Pucallpa and Lima paintings are often featured in exhibitions, such as the 2012 exhibition "El Milagro Verde, historia de la Pintura Amazónica" ("The Green Miracle, the History of Amazon Painting") at the gallery of Luis Miró Quesada Garland in the Miraflores area of Lima. Artistic production by artisans, artists, curators, and indigenous community organizations in Lima strengthen, revitalize, adapt, and generate the signification of indigenous form and pattern. Abstract traditional *kené* compositions have morphed to include *kené*, figural narratives, and abstract forms in the jungle reflecting the invisible Shipibo and broader Amazonian world that serve as symbols of cultural continuity. Support by cultural institutions in Lima in recent years has produced opportunities for urban audiences to experience in a multisensory way the vast cultural wealth of the Amazon seen in traditional and new forms.

Shipibo and Andean artists welcome this recognition but also are wary of being regarded only as craft vendors for tourist or trinket consumerism or indigenous peoples dressed in traditional garb visually suggesting inclusion but not fully participating as citizens of Peru. Urban Shipibo question the commercial printing of cloth with *kené* patterns as solely a commodity within the dominant market system and an



FIG. 5.4. Painting by Rember Yahuarcani, acrylic on canvas, 2008. Photo: J.C. Odland.

adulteration of intellectual property. To the Shipibo, their indigenous designs signify their intangible cultural heritage (Torres & Denegri, 2012). Indeed, painted and embroidered *kené* cloths reveal a multiplicity of meanings to viewers today.

In March 2014, an art exhibition curated by Maria Eugenia Yllia at the Municipal Art Gallery Pancho Fierro and presented by the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima devoted itself to the topic of rights, inclusion, and participation of indigenous peoples in democratic and cultural processes. This weeklong exhibition, titled “Buscando el río: Estéticas y representaciones de los pueblos indígenas amazónicos en Lima” (“Looking for the River: Aesthetics and Representations of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples in Lima”), featured multidisciplinary artwork by various Amazonian indigenous visual artists, such as Victor Roque Churay Ivá Wajyamú (Bora); Rember Yahuarcani (Aymenu-Huitoto); Enrique Casanto Shingari (Ashaninka); Robert Rengifo Chonomeni, Elena Valera Bahuan Jisbe, Olinda Silvanó “Reshinjabe Inuma,” Lastenia Canayo Pecon Quena, Roldán Shoyan Shēca Pinedo, Harry Pinedo Inin Metsa May, and Julio Maldonado Rawa (Shipibo-Conibo); and Paul Taricuarima (Kukama-Kukamilla). In separate screenings, young indigenous filmmakers contributed their voice and filmed vision of Amazonian life. The works of these artists reflect the breadth and richness of contemporary Amazonian culture.

The use of new media to promote indigenous artists is increasingly utilized. On April 4, 2014, the Shipibo’s Cantagallo community’s Facebook page “Comunidad Shipiba de Lima-Cantagallo” posted a video by Naty Muñoz of the Pucallpa-born artist Olinda “Reshin Jisbe” Silvanó speaking about her artwork at the exhibition “Looking at the River.” Silvanó, dressed in traditional Shipibo costume, describes the meaning of her figural, architectural, and *kené* elements. Her rectangular, embroidered artwork is expanded beyond the traditional interpretation of a Shipibo woman’s skirt. Now, the traditional Shipibo materials, stitched process, and *kené* are transformed in

her composition as they feature pictorial elements of her urban indigenous experience.

Cantagallo is the section of Lima where Shipibo migrants have gathered to live as a community since 2000. In March 2015, this community was relocated to temporary housing for the construction of a highway and parkway along the Rimac River. A month of multiple protests secured the promise of a new location with housing, water, electricity, and a rebuilt school, again teaching in both Spanish and Shipibo. The Shipibo community Facebook page “Comunidad Shipiba de Lima-Cantagallo” identifies its goal as preserving and promoting

Shipibo ancestral traditions through the production of crafts, painting, music, food, dance, and natural medicine. Its regular entries document Shipibo artists and artisans working in the city of Lima as they recognize the economic importance of their production of handicrafts and textiles embroidered and painted with the *kené* designs.

In 2001, urban Shipibo living in Lima organized their artistic community as the Association of Shipibo Artisan Residents in Lima (ASHIREL [Asociación de Artesanos Shipibos Residentes en Lima]). Built on strong, traditional village models of community, they meet weekly to formally discuss economic issues related to the sale and production of crafts and community living and housing issues. Workshops provide educational forums for women crafting designs with *kené*. In 2008, Jonás, president of ASHIREL, spoke about how this group has strengthened the feeling of community among Cantagallo residents by drawing on their Amazonian traditions: “We are surrounded by customs of an Occidentalized atmosphere. It is in this way that we imaginatively feel that it is a community and that we live in a community” (Zavala & Bariola, 2008: 154). The traditional structure of Amazon communities is echoed in the collaborative and reciprocal community structure of ASHIREL.

Artisan communities in the urban centers of Cantagallo in Lima and Pucallpa often expand to include contributions of

people of other backgrounds. Interactions in Lima with other artists of diverse backgrounds, suppliers of materials, patrons of their work, and gallery owners provide opportunities to expand community. "Ideas of community will depend on the point of view of the individual—where s/he happens to be, and who else is present in a particular geographical area" (Earle, 2009: 707). Acts of inclusion and interactions often reveal a shared visual language and shared artistic practices. Cultural integrity, as a living social unit, is maintained by its openness to incorporating others into the continuity of its structure (Washburn & Crowe, 2004). For instance, an Andean woman in Lima creates Shipibo textiles in Cantagallo, the Shipibo community in Lima. The Shipibo husband of the Andean woman offers the following reflection: "I taught her [Shipibo handicraft] so that she could work. And she is already better than me. Although I am Shipibo, aren't I? And instead of working on this, I am only with papers, the office. She now dedicates herself to this, she makes her handicraft and she earns. We could say now that she is a Shipiba" (Zavala & Bariola, 2008: 156). These actions of incorporation and inclusion represent the evolving Amazonian communities whose practices participate in their historical-cultural traditions of community, pattern, and design and who together share concerns of current challenges to land and economic inequalities. Each carefully crafted symmetrical design represents the complex metaphors that link Shipibo and Andean design to their legends and community narratives as well as to their native landscape. In this dynamic and inclusive evolution of urban artist communities, we see, in a sense, an emergent cosmopolitanism that is becoming

embedded in the indigenous reproduction and transmission of their cultural heritage.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how people active in the visual arts within Shipibo and Andean communities of Peru are negotiating and transforming their cultural landscape by drawing on historical community strengths and traditions. Woven and embroidered cloths, once solely ceremonial in function, are now both art and aesthetic crafted object. In addition, the invisible, spiritual, and metaphysical indigenous world once solely expressed through abstract symmetrical pattern on ceramics and textiles is increasingly viewed through painting, sculpture, and other new media with narratives revealing a contemporary indigenous perspective of their relationship with community, figure, and land as these artists and craftspeople negotiate urban spaces and challenges beyond the jungle.

Textiles and art, in contemporary Shipibo and Andean cultures, function as symbol and document of cultural continuity and knowledge generating new signification as form, pattern, and design serve to visually unify evolving indigenous communities. This chapter notes how art practitioners, working with both traditional and new forms of art, increasingly participate in more diverse urban communities that include local, national, and international social and cultural networks. Through their work, we can see how visual arts and design can drive cultural, political, and economic awareness of indigenous communities in Peru.

PART II:

THE MEANINGS OF KENE DESIGN

CHAPTER 6: SHIPIBO-CONIBO MATERIAL CULTURE: TEXTILES AND CERAMICS IN THE FIELD MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

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Abstract

J. Claire Odland and Ronald L. Weber provide a detailed description of the Shipibo-Conibo ceramics and textiles in the Field Museum Collections, presenting and illustrating definitive examples. They discuss the differences in contemporary changes in men's and women's fashions and recent changes in methods of production. Makers, methods, and materials of fabrication are examined and illustrated, including spinning, weaving, and the special techniques for decorating cloth.

Resumen

J. Claire Odland y Ronald L. Weber nos dan una descripción detallada de las cerámicas y textiles shipibo-conibo de las colecciones del Field Museum, presentando e ilustrando ejemplos definitivos. Se discute las diferencias en los cambios contemporáneos en la moda de los hombres y mujeres y los recientes cambios en los métodos de producción. En este capítulo se examina e ilustra a los artesanos, sus métodos y materiales de fabricación, lo que incluye el hilado, el tejido y las técnicas especiales de decoración de las telas.

Introduction

In the many collections at the Field Museum, peoples' arts and apparel demonstrate their visions of their culture and the world they inhabit. The Shipibo-Conibo women of Peru use their impressive skills to express their heritage and their material culture, producing and covering with the distinctive patterns known as *kené* their beautiful woven, embroidered, and painted garments, ceramics, tools for daily life, and ceremonial objects, such as decorated paddles and knives (see Appendix I). The Museum houses 207 textiles and textile tools and 123 ceramic pieces collected from the peoples of the Peruvian Amazon since 1892, among the 584 artifacts from the Shipibo, Conibo (formerly known as Chunchos), and nearby groups of Arawak speakers, Campas and Piros.

This chapter begins by presenting artifacts selected for exemplary form, interesting provenience, or exceptional beauty and placing them in context. Emphasis is given to the textile over the ceramic collection because the Shipibo people, especially the women, continue to wear their traditional garments but have largely replaced their traditional ceramics with plastic and aluminum pots. It then discusses the differences in development of men's and women's current dress styles and, finally, the changing materials and methods of fabrication. The archaeological tradition of the Shipibo-Conibo people is discussed in the chapter by Weber, Morales, and Mujica (this volume), and interviews with contemporary Shipibo on their culture, collected during fieldwork in 2007, 2008, and 2010, are included in Odland (this volume). We regret that space does not

allow us to show a greater number of examples, but, where possible, references are provided to enable further study.

Textile and ceramic arts of the Shipibo and the Conibo feature the distinctive, complex pattern of designs known as *kené* or *quene* discussed in Belaunde (this volume), who investigates the history of *kené* and its spiritual and material uses and relates the *kené* traditions of the Shipibo-Conibo to those of other Amazonian people. Shipibo people frequently say that the *kené* are like the paths of life, or roads, or the meanders of the rivers where they live. Sometimes they say they are the patterns and movements of the anaconda or Ronin the cosmic serpent (see Morales et al., this volume), and sometimes they say that these patterns are only a fraction of what their ancestors used to know (Odland, 2007). Gebhart-Sayer (1984: 7), too, noted the lack of meaning now attached to these intricate motifs: "Elders retain some knowledge of the meaning of certain design motifs, of their therapeutic applicability and spiritual origin." The long-term survival and in fact near obsessive repetition of this art form argues for its great cultural significance. Shipibo women consider themselves artists; because they pride themselves on the unique individuality of every work, makers' names are given in this chapter whenever possible.

Ceramics

Contemporary Shipibo-Conibo ceramics are covered in *kené*, as are most of their decorative arts. Pots are made in five basic,

named functional shapes, in incremental sizes: *quenpó*, *quenchá*, *quentí*, *chomo*, and *mahueta*. The *quenpó* form is a drinking vessel, with the mouth narrower than the belly, made in both everyday and fancier, ceremonial versions, usually covered on the outside in a white slip decorated with black and red designs and left plain on the inside. Ceremonial versions may be elaborately made with double walls that contain little clay balls, making a drinking bowl that chimes like a bell.

The *chomo* form, for carrying water and storing liquids, is made with a long neck and may be topped with a *quenpó* or an inverted *chomo* lid. It is usually made with a white background decorated with *kené* designs. The *joni chomo* form, the most impressive, is a similar basic shape but decorated with the face and body of a woman or, rarely, a man. Effigy pots may be a simple head and body, as shown in FM284544 (Fig. 4.10), or they may have finely rendered faces, ears, arms, legs, and even sexual organs. A work by Delia Cauper features a mother effigy pot with sculptures of a pair of children clinging to her sides (Fig. 4.11). In Caimito, archaeologists found that the ancient Caimito and Napo people of the upper Ucayali River buried their dead inside effigy pots: large ceramic vessels such as these, funerary urns representing a woman giving birth, with knees apart. The historic Conibo used very large *chomos* with no faces for their burials. The first Shipibo effigy pots were made by Casimira of San Francisco de Yarinacocha (Heath, in Alayza et al., 2002: 38–39).

The *quenchá*, made for serving or eating food, takes various shapes, always with a wider mouth than belly. These vessels, usually in a red background with white designs, may have *kené* painted on the inside, protected with a waterproof glaze from hot or greasy foods. (For further study, refer to FM242564, not shown.) The *quentí* is a plain, unpainted, and heat-resistant cooking pot, sometimes decorated with incisions around the neck.

The largest form of pot is the *mahueta*; the pot FM242544 (Fig. 4.7) is shown being made in 1961 in the photograph in Figure 4.8. These big-bellied pots, made for brewing *masato* beer, may measure up to 1.5 m high, the head height of many Shipibo women. During a brewing process or a drinking ceremony, such as the *Anisheati*, they are buried up to the design figures around the belly, which both keeps the *masato* cool and fresh and prevents the pots from tipping over.

All Shipibo-Conibo ceramics are coil built, without use of a wheel. Potters take clay from local sources, mixing it with the ashes of apacharama tree bark, ground bits of broken pottery, or even ancient potsherds as a tempering medium, increasing the strength of the pot. According to Roe (1982: 115), “The Shipibo are one of the few aboriginal groups in the world who have a specific term for potsherd: *quēnquēsh*. The Shipibo visit archaeological sites [*sic*] to mine them for potsherds because vessel fragments exposed to thousands of years of weathering are much more friable than their own hard pottery and can with greater ease be ground up to form one category of ceramic temper.” One can assume by the special word that a potsherd is a commodity of value.

When a Shipibo woman died, it was customary to break her pots and bury them with her. While this may appear sentimental to Western eyes, in any case, the life span of household ceramics was brief; “they break, it’s not important, tomorrow a replacement can be made. . . . In all the years I

spent in the Ucayali, I never saw a piece that was more than one year old” (Heath, in Alayza et al., 2002b: 38, my translation).

When completely formed, the walls of the pots are scraped thin and polished smooth, using pieces of coconut shell, wood, or corncobs, and then polished smooth with a pebble. Drying in the sun for several days, the pots are fired once or twice over wood fires or in a special pottery kiln called a *mapauoiti*. A white clay slip background may be applied first, followed by red and black colors made from boiled tree bark. Belaunde (this volume) details the stages of painting *kené* on ceramics. A postfired glazing resin from a tree sap, a variety of copal, may be used to waterproof or simply add shine to the finished work, although recently cheap, polyurethane varnish may be used on tourist-quality pots. Ceramic artists, unlike textile artists, usually work alone, as Feldman (this volume) notes, and the market for their products is declining. Pots for daily use have been replaced largely by metal and plastic, and as skilled artists age, young people no longer want to learn the work.

Textiles

The textiles in the Field Museum Collections include 74 woman’s skirts, called the *chitonte*; 15 of the man’s tunic known as the *cushma* or *tari*; 50 bags (*pisha*) for both men and women; and six headdresses or crown (*maiti*). In addition, there are the woman’s blouse (*coton*) and adornments and accessories for both genders: lip ornaments, beaded necklaces, breastplates, wristlets, and belts.

Two Shipibo-Conibo garments are unmistakable icons of the culture, still in current usage: the man’s *cushma*, with its large, square form that displays vertical fields of *kené* reaching from the shoulders to the ankles, and the woman’s *chitonte*, a horizontally oriented, rectangular skirt. The men in Tschopik’s 1953 film (Odland, this volume) would feel comfortably dressed attending ceremonies or special occasions in 2011; men wearing various styles of *cushmas* and *maitis* lift their cups and clubs in celebration of the *Anisheati* in Figure 4.9, much like those worn by today’s men, as shown in Figure 4.3.

Since the late 1880s, Shipibo men were frequently induced into labor in the rubber boom, which led them to adopt Western clothing, while women, who until recently remained in their home villages, continued to use their traditional language and dress. Contemporary Shipibo men dress most often in Western clothing, but some older men still wear the *cushma* or *tari* in the evening and on ceremonial occasions, identical to that modeled by José Roque in 1995 (Fig. 4.12). In contrast, women’s garments today are cut or woven in the same shape as the *chitontes* and blouses in Figure 4.2 but are now fashioned into more colorful and highly decorated styles that far outshine the styles of 1953.

The *cushma* is made of several panels woven to the proper width limited to the use of a back-strap loom and sewn together into the finished garment, usually approximately 150 cm wide by 110 cm long. It is pulled over the head and covers the arms to below the elbow. The vertical seams of the garment determine that the warp-faced stripes and painted patterns run in columns. In contrast, the horizontal rectangle of a woman’s skirt means that the *kené* motifs and the warp-faced stripes of usually doubled threads are oriented in rows. The stripes and borders of

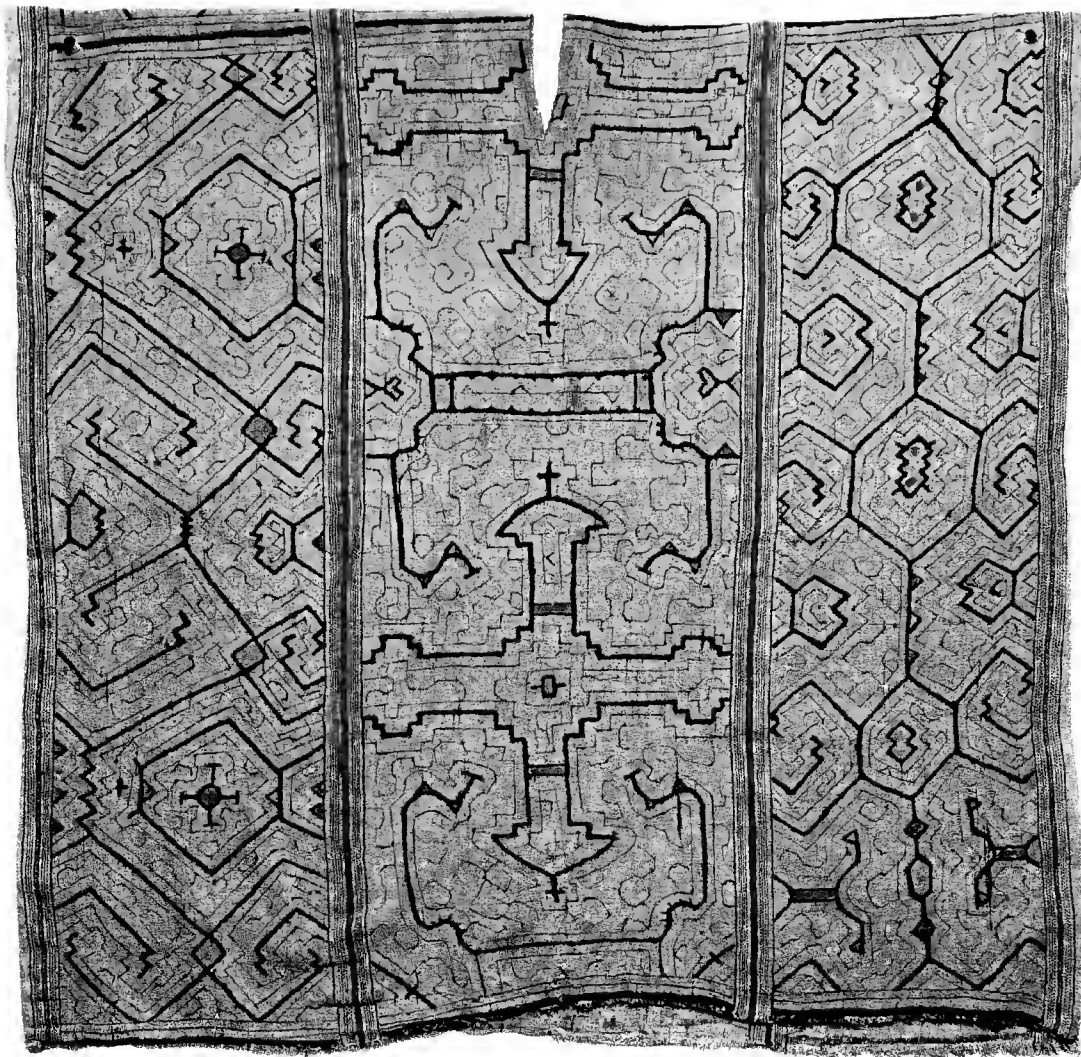


FIG. 6.1. FM342081, *cushma* (*tari*), Conibo, 1969. 106 × 104 cm. Hand-spun white cotton with multicolor cotton warp stripes, back-strap loomed, hand sewn. Painted in black *kené* figures in a style called *joshō quehueya*, with pink and brown accents of unknown paint. 9–12 paired wpc, ground; 18 double wpc, stripes; 7–8 single ppc. Collected by R. L. Weber from maker, Imariacocha. Photo: N. Feldman and J. C. Odland.

colorful warp threads or lavish embroidery frame the *kené* motifs and reinforce these visual gender orientations. This vertical versus horizontal dichotomy is an ancient trait with cultures living east of the Andes (Weber, 2007).

All *cushmas* in the collection were fabricated of back-strap-loomed, hand-spun cotton, with multicolor stripes of single, doubled, or even tripled warps. Two *cushmas* collected in 1969 are made of three or four panels hand sewn together and painted with large-scale *kené* figures. FM342081 (Fig. 6.1) appears lightly worn; the creamy natural white cotton and accent colors of pink and brown are fresh, and the black *kené* figures are crisp and dramatic in a style called “*joshō quehueya*” (Weber, 2007). The central figures, which run across the join of the two panels, are symmetrical, and the neck opening would place the wearer’s head within a cross figure, an important motif discussed in detail in Belaunde (this volume). The columns of figures on the side panels present different, repetitive *kené* motifs.

Also from 1969, FM342077 (Fig. 6.2) is of a looser plain weave, made in four equal-width panels whose *kené* figures seem to repeat but do not match from one panel to another. The neck opening occurs between two panels and shows signs of wear. The entire *cushma* has been over-dyed, probably with mahogany, to a warm, reddish brown, but the *kené* figures called “*joshō tari bepocoa*,” meaning a white tunic dyed brown, still show clearly (Weber, 2007). In the same tradition but purchased nearly 32 years later in 1998, FM342082 (Fig. 6.3) is fabricated in two matching and elaborately symmetrical panels, smoothly joined in the center before being decorated with *kené*. The multicolor acrylic warp stripes frame symmetrical fields of

kené motifs, muted by an over-dye of mahogany. This *cushma* was worn in 2001 at the *Anisheati* Festival in Nuevo Chicago.

Seen worn by its shaman owner in Figure 6.4, FM342078 (Fig. 6.5) is a special case because men’s clothing is rarely embroidered. Weber purchased this *cushma* in 1988 from the shaman and his wife Erminia Sanancino Monzonbite (who made it), both *ayahuasca* healers in Canaan de Cachiaco. The *cushma* has a back embroidered in multicolor *kené* figures over what appears in the photograph to be a solid black fabric but was originally a traditionally made, white *cushma*, painted in *kené* figures and now over-dyed so many times with mahogany and mud fixative that these figures are all but lost. It has an added back bottom panel of a commercial fabric known as *cañamazo*, a complex gauze weave that was embroidered and appliquéd and then finished with an embroidered band encircling the entire hem.

The *cushma*-style shirt FM342112 (Fig. 6.6) illustrates how vital it was felt to identify oneself as Shipibo. This scaled-down tunic was made by Juana Cumapa Regnifo for her husband José Roque and worn during his visit to the Field Museum in Chicago in 2000. Made of commercial unbleached cotton fabric, its three fields of symmetrical *kené* figures are framed in black and made proportionate to a garment a man could wear appropriately in a large American city. The figures were produced traditionally using earth dyes and fixatives and then given accent colors of unknown paints.

The most recent *cushma* in the collection is FM341545 (Fig. 6.7), collected in 2007. Ernestina Catarina Lopez made it for her son Horacio Gordon Catalino, son of shaman Horacio Gordon Urquía. The two panels of symmetrical figures balance but do



FIG. 6.2. FM342077, *cushma*, 1969. 101×112 cm. Originally hand-spun white cotton, back-strap loomed in four equal panels with multicolor warp stripes, hand sewn in the center and sides. Painted with black *kené* figures in a style called *joshō tari bepocōa* and over-dyed reddish brown, probably with mahogany. 10–12 wpc; 7 ppc. Collected by R. L. Weber. Photo: N. Feldman and J. C. Odland.

not match. The size and proportions of the garment suggest the relatively taller and larger body of recent generations. Although it is back-strap loomed of hand-spun white cotton with all the traditional value of such laborious effort, the owners' willingness to sell such a textile shows the current value of money over tradition.

Men's *cushmas* have changed little in style or fabrication, probably because they are reserved for special or ceremonial occasions. In the 1980s, *cushmas* were still being worn in the evenings for warmth or for protection from mosquitoes (Eakin, 1986). They continue to be made of homegrown, hand-spun cotton, usually by a man's wife or mother, back-strap loomed with colorful warp stripes, typically of commercial acrylic thread, that frame and organize the painted brownish-black motifs.

While the *cushma* has practically frozen in time and become a sort of formal wear for men, women are constantly seeking a fresh and more exciting style for their skirts. Compared to the hand-spun, hand-woven, and painted *cushma*, newer *chitonte*

fashions include the use of commercial materials and additional embellishment techniques: appliqué of cut fabric, ribbon, or rickrack; beaded fringes; bright-colored embroidery threads in cotton and acrylic; *tocuyo*, an unbleached cotton plain weave; *cañamazo*, a white cotton embroidery canvas, made in a variety of basket weaves and complex gauze weaves; and *gabardina*, a black polyester twill. *Tocuyo* is used for painted decorations on men's vests, shirts, and pieces for the tourist market as well as for painted and embroidered women's skirts. Vivid embroidery threads, rickrack embellishments, materials, and cotton and acrylic thread may be bought from local traders or in a tiny shop, such as that seen in 2007 in the community of Santa Rosa, or by making a one- or two-day trip by river from small outlying communities to Pucallpa or Contamana.

The word *chitonte* literally means "a length of fabric," used to indicate a skirt, a flat rectangle of fabric approximately 150 cm by 70 cm that is usually sewn into a tube, worn as a knee-length skirt, rather like a sarong. It is worn folded with two inverted



FIG. 6.3. FM342082, *cushma*, 1998. 134×110 cm. Hand-spun cotton, originally white, with multicolor acrylic warp stripes, back-strap loomed in two equal panels, hand sewn in the center and sides, leaving openings for head and arms. Painted with black *kené* figures and over-dyed reddish brown, probably with mahogany. 10–14 wpc, doubled; 9 ppc, single. Collected by R. Weber. Photo: N. Feldman and J. C. Odland.

pleats in front and twisted to stay in place with the further security of a piece of cord. At times, a heavy, ornamental beaded belt may be added over the folds. Photographs in Farabee (1922) also show women wearing the many-strand

bead belts that were highly prized until at least 1970 but are rarely seen in the 21st century. This allows for comfortable adjustments during pregnancy. The same piece of fabric, if left unsewn, may also be worn as a wrap: a *ricote* or *pampanilla*.



FIG. 6.4. Shaman Olivero Garcia Panduro and his wife, Erminia Sanancin Monzonbite, in classic Shipibo dress at Canaan de Cachiaco in 1988. Both the *chitonte* and the *tari* are in the black phase with embroidery and appliqué. The handkerchief worn on the head is a very common tradition (see Fig. 4.5, FM342078). Photo: R. L. Weber.



FIG. 6.5. FM342078, *cushma*, back view, 1988. 101 × 112 cm. Hand-spun cotton, originally white, back-strap loomed in two panels with multicolor warp stripes of cotton and acrylic. Originally painted with black *kené* figures, over-dyed with mud dye before embroidering. Back center panel embroidered in multicolor *kené* figures and an added bottom piece of the commercial complex gauze weave, *cañamazo*, hand embroidered and machine appliquéd, and bottom of entire garment encircled with multicolor embroidered stripes. The use of embroidery in a man's garment is extremely rare (for comparative style and fabrication, see a woman's *chitonte*, No. 40.0/ 7214, at the American Museum of Natural History). Original panels 14 wpc doubled, ground, 18 wpc stripes; 7 ppc, single, and various commercial cloths. Collected by Weber from shaman, husband of maker Erminia Sanancino Monzonbite, Canaan de Cachiaco, Ucayali River, shown in Figure 6.4. Photo: N. Feldman and J. C. Odland

History

Historic photographs of Shipibo women show them wearing a skirt and a piece of cotton cloth over both shoulders like a shawl instead of a blouse. Farabee's illustrations show these painted with the intricate designs characteristic of the riverine Panoans (Farabee, 1922: 82) and women with the cotton cloaks or shawls that are approximately the same dimensions as a *chitonte* but not sewn into a tube. Made of cotton cloth or polyester satin, the blouse has two named parts: the yoke element is known as the *techon* and the torso component that hangs down in back the *chichon* (Weber, 2007).

The *chitonte* is still the common form of Shipibo women's dress, and *chitontes* in the collection date from 1962 to 2008, exhibiting a consistent fashion of two or three bands of horizontal *kené* figures framed by groups of narrow stripes. Skirts were not always sewn into a tube and may thus better display to the camera the full range of *kené* patterning in, for example, FM242517 (Fig. 6.8), collected in Callería in 1962 by Malkin. This textile is made of back-strap-loomed, white hand-spun cotton, painted with three bands of black and multicolor

kené figures. The groups of multicolor stripes are hand embroidered into the finished weave and are not woven stripes.

The *chitonte* in Figure 6.9, FM342063 from Imariacocha, is Conibo, organized with three rows of painted *kené* figures on a white background and separated by woven warp stripes, some in twill weave. According to Weber (2007), "The broad twill design and the use of single warps appear to be most characteristic of up-river Panoans, especially the Conibo. This type of *chitonte* is known by the Shipibo as *joshó queneya*, meaning white with designs." One side of the skirt has turned a light brown since its purchase in 1969.

Writing in 1985, Gebhart-Sayer (1985b: 5) found traditionally patterned skirts still worn by "all adult women. . . . The complexity of the style informs about the degree to which a woman possesses shina (+intellectuality [*sic*], creativity and spiritual depth), a most important criterion in the striving for personal identity. On the other hand, the materials used for the decoration of the skirt speak of the economic status of the family. Embroidery yarns, for instance, which have to be bought in town, are extremely expensive. Some skirts are so heavily decorated that the embroidery actually forms additional layers of material."

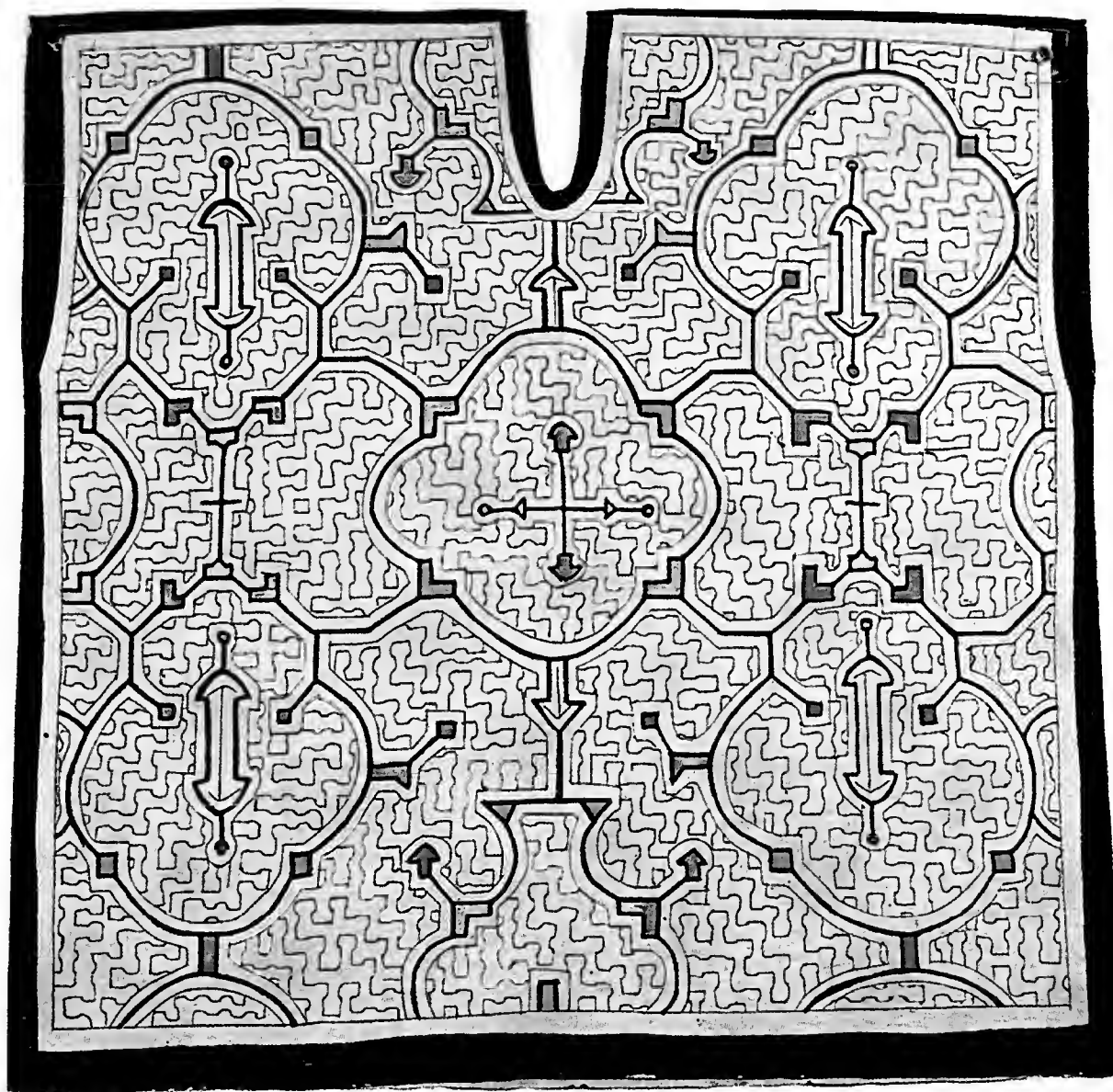


FIG. 6.6. FM342112, man's vest, 2000. 77 × 76 cm. White cotton commercial plain weave fabric, *tocuyo*. Painted with black *kené* figures and multicolor accents of unknown paint. Commercial cloth. Collected by R. Weber from maker Juana Cumapa Regnifo, Nuevo Chicago. Photo: J. C. Odland.

Judging by the textiles in the Museum collection, commercially made *cañamazo* has been available in the region since the 1980s. The easily visible grid of this cloth facilitated tedious counted-thread embroidery, which may have led to a greater use of embroidery and an apparent corresponding decrease in the popularity of painted *chitontes*. When embroidered on a plain-weave piece of *cañamazo*, the pattern appears to be woven in, in the style of the warp-patterned bands and straps characteristic of much of Peru.

The repetition of small geometric forms in FM342091 (Fig. 6.10) takes on a truly anaconda-like pattern that, despite all appearances, is produced by running-stitch embroidery on *cañamazo*, not by weaving, and is trimmed with cross-stitch. The garment was originally white with bright color accents and later over-dyed, possibly with mahogany, muting the colors. This style is known as *joshin quehueya*, meaning “reddish with embroidery” (Weber, 2007).

Other *chitontes* in the collection, retaining their original bright colors against a ground of white *cañamazo*, are FM338492 (Fig. 6.11), collected by Roosevelt and Philipp in 2001 in Nuevo Chicago, and FM341557 (Fig. 6.12), collected by Wali and Odland in 2007 in Manco Capac. This style combines a snakeskin-like pattern of small geometric forms and fine, curved *kené* figures framed by groups of multicolored stripes embroidered in running stitch and cross-stitch. FM338492 (Fig. 6.11) is further decorated with a fringe of nuts and tiny beads designed to rattle during dancing.

Most recently, artists have been using the solid black background of *gabardina* to brilliantly set off brightly colored *kené* figures, and the twill weave of this fabric more easily accommodates curved embroidery forms. According to Weber (2007), the type illustrated by FM342161 (Fig. 6.13) is called “*huiso-kené* (black figures) with the designs called *maya-quene* (curved figures) and *coros-quene* (cross figures) combined into *maya-coros-quene*.” This skirt has a single panel of curving *kené* figures embroidered on the black *gabardina*, framed and bordered by groups of multicolor stripes in running stitch, chain stitch, cross-stitch, and zigzag stitch.

FM341535 (Fig. 6.14) is made of unbleached cotton *tocuyo*, originally a natural white cloth, embroidered in chain stitch, running stitch, cross-stitch, and zigzag stitch and bound with blanket stitch. In Pucallpa, Edid Linares Vega described the steps of making it: first, embroidering it; then over-dyeing the whole embroidered cloth a mahogany brown; and, finally, painting the areas surrounding the embroidery with mud fixative to turn them black (Odland, 2007). The cotton and acrylic threads responded differently to the over-dye, muting the cotton threads more than the acrylics.

FM341547 (Fig. 6.15) is a remarkably striking, fully embroidered *chitonte*, made by Virgilia Tanchiba Valles of Manco Capac. Instead of the usual two or three rows of figures, the skirt is completely filled with four separate rectangular fields of *kené* figures on black *gabardina*. Each field has its own color scheme, defined by a frame of multicolor stripes executed in chain stitch,

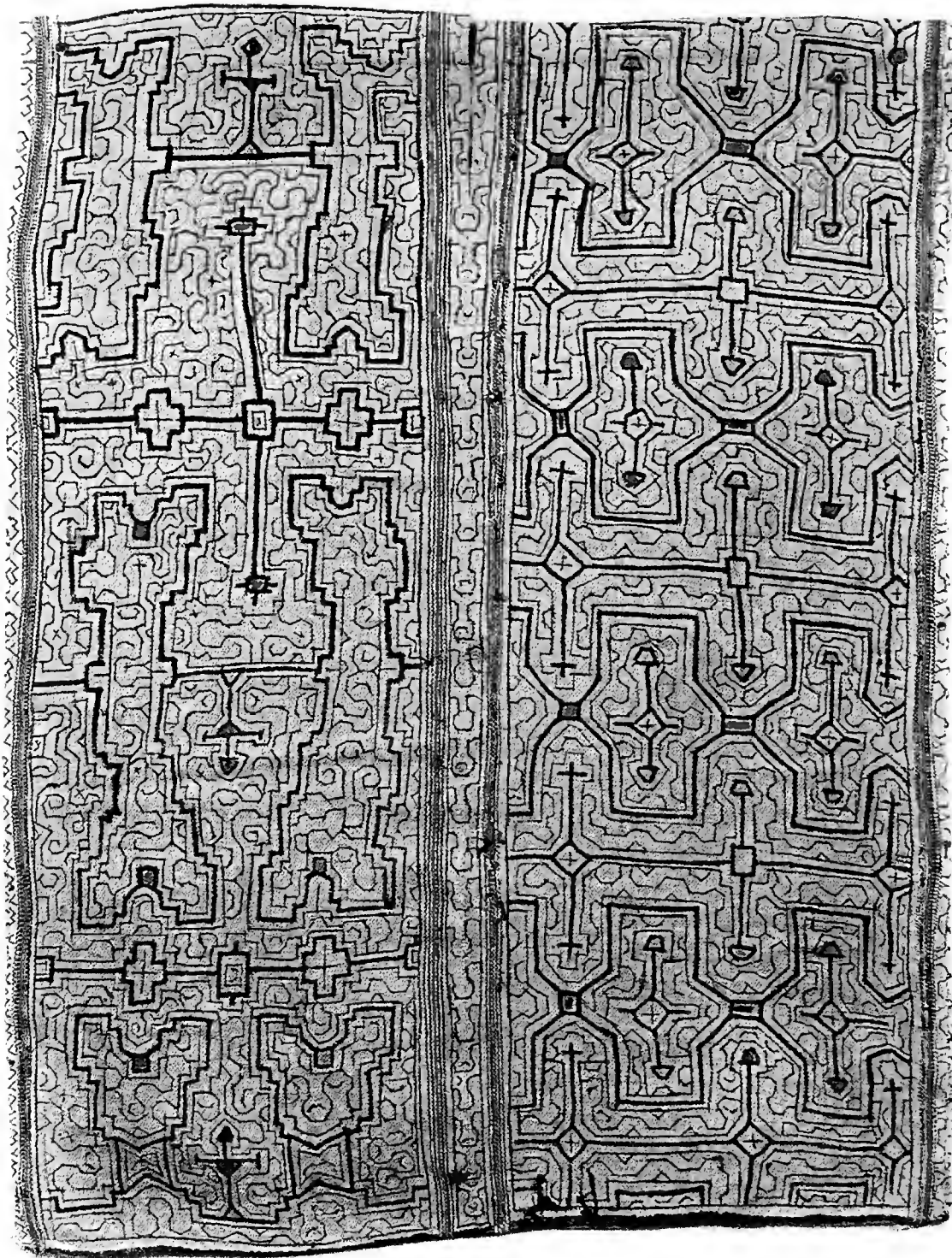


FIG. 6.7. FM341545, *cushma*, 2007. 98 × 128 cm. Hand-spun natural white cotton with multicolor acrylic warp stripes, back-strap loomed in two panels. Painted with black *kené* designs and multicolor accents of unknown paint. 7.5 wpc, doubled; 6 ppc, doubled; both unplied. Collected by A. Wali and J. C. Odland from maker. Photo: J. C. Odland.

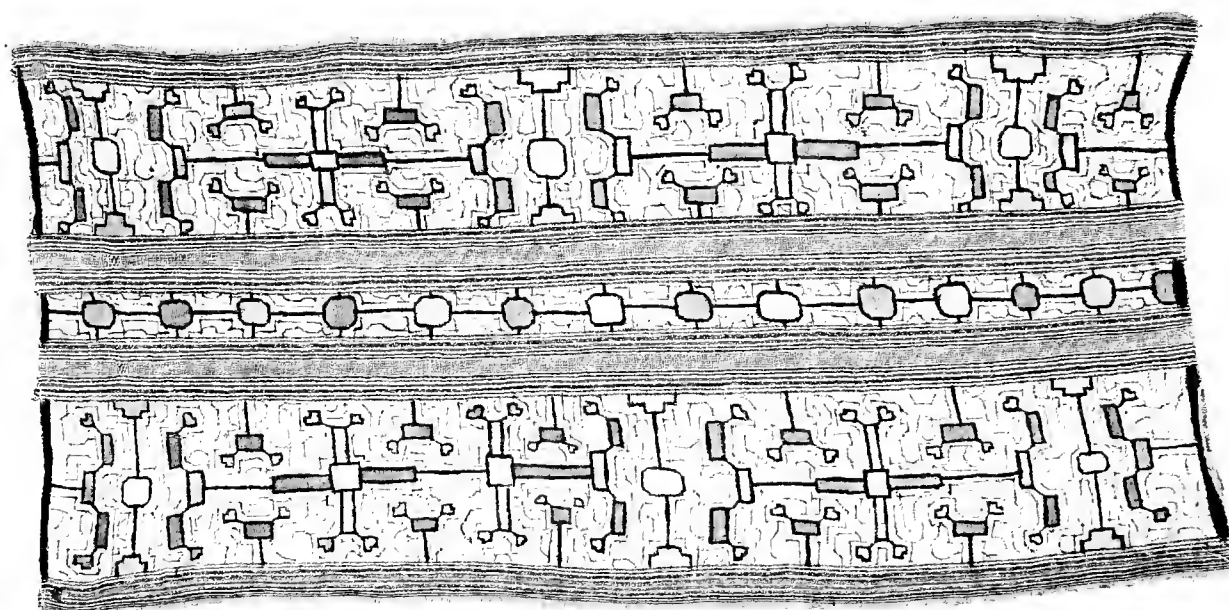


FIG. 6.8. FM242517, *chitonte*, 1962. 135 × 62.5 cm. Hand-spun natural white cotton, loosely back-strap loomed in two panels. Painted with three bands of black *kené* figures and multicolor accents of unknown paint. Multicolor acrylic stripes are embroidered, not woven in. 24 wpc, doubled; 9 ppc, single. Collected by B. Malkin, Colonia Calleria. Photo: J. C. Odland.

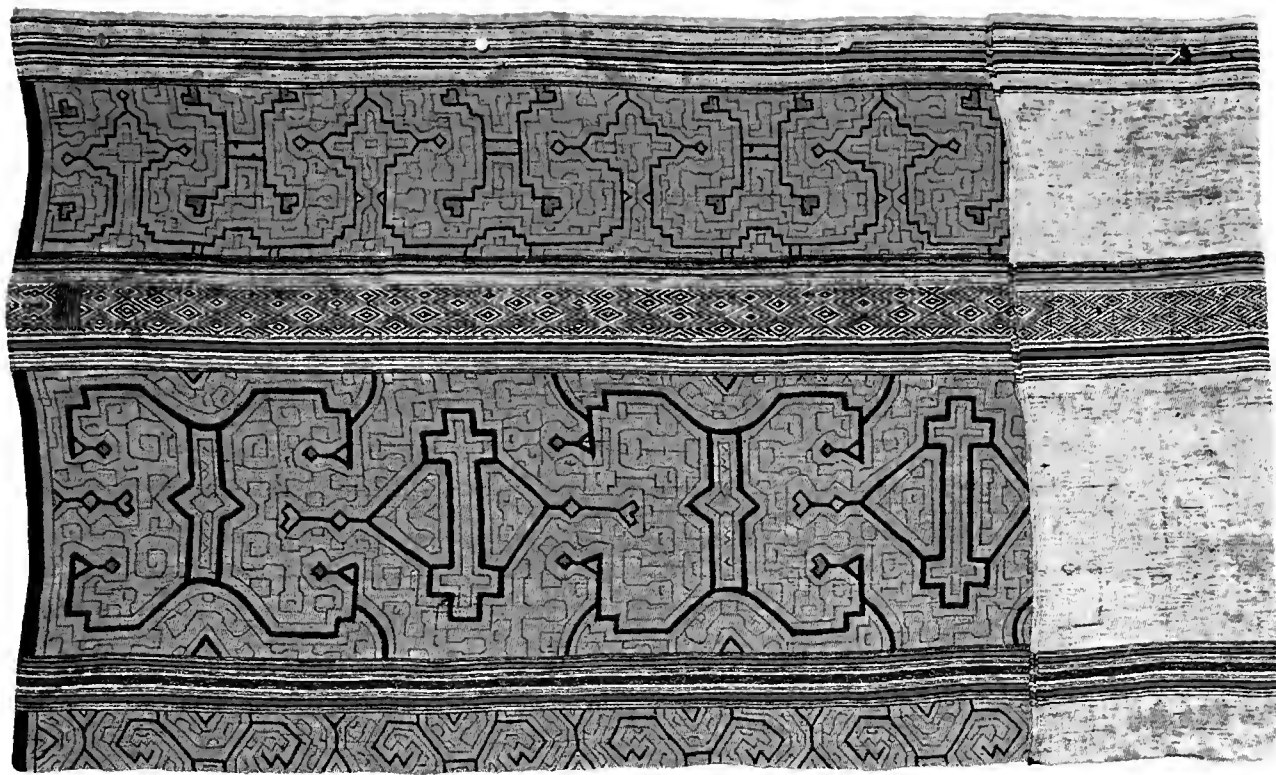


FIG. 6.9. FM342063, *chitonte*, Conibo, 1969. 144×70 cm. Threads of probably commercial cotton, originally white, back-strap loomed in one panel. One side of the skirt has turned a light brown. Painted in three bands of black *kené* figures with black cotton twill weave and multicolor acrylic warp stripes. Style known by the Shipibo as *joshó queneya*. 22 wpc, single; 14 doubled, plied wpc twill weave stripes; 10 ppc. Collected by Weber from maker Shebonasi, Imariacocha. Photo: N. Feldman and J. C. Odland.

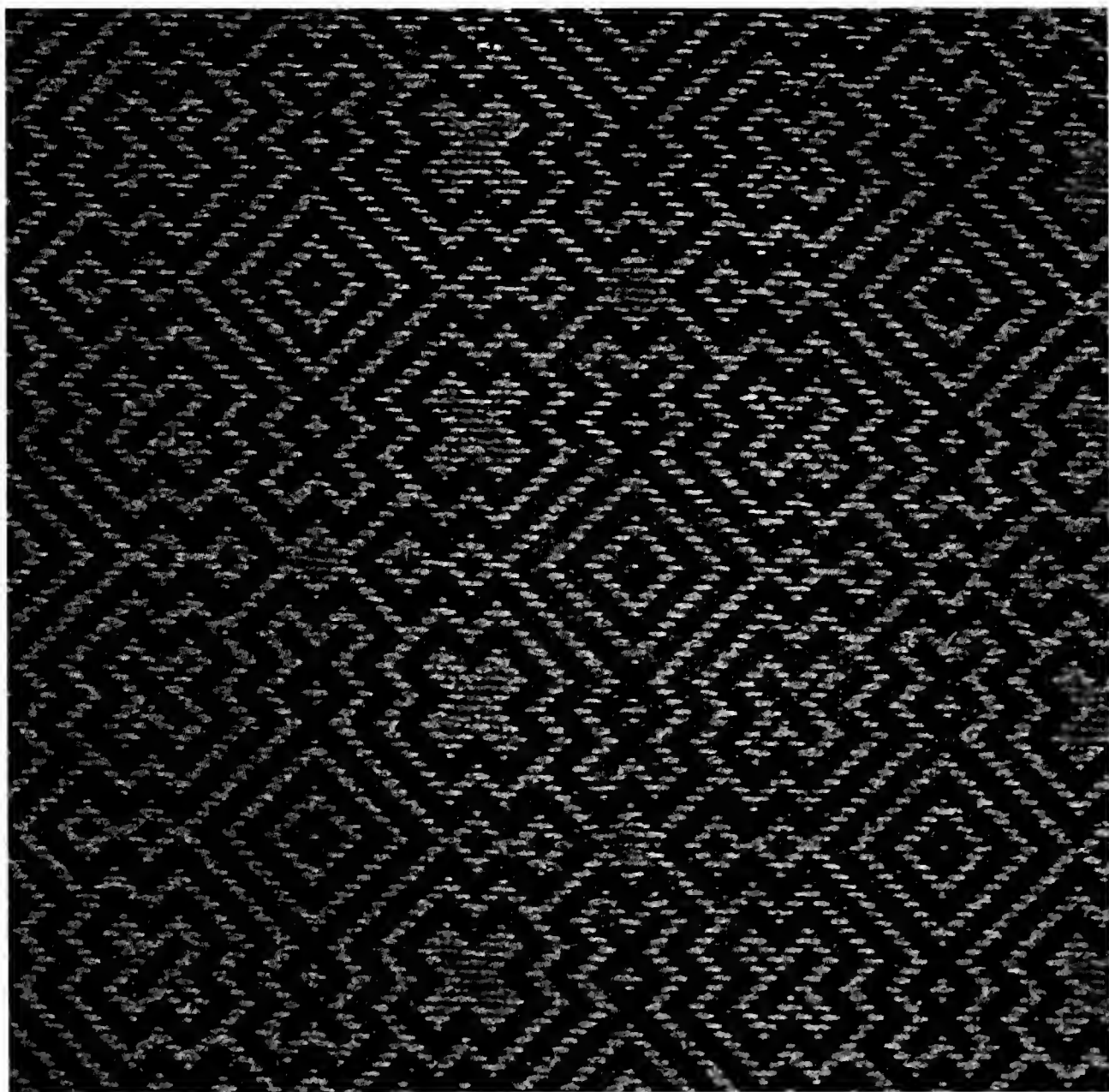


FIG. 6.10. Detail of FM342091, *chitonte*, 1988. Circumference 150×64 cm. *Cañamazo*, commercial cotton, originally white, complex gauze weave, hand embroidered with two fields of multicolor geometric *kené* figures and small accent figures of diamonds and crosses. Figures are embroidered, not woven in. Style known as *joshin quehueya*. Over-dyed with unknown dye, muting the colors. Collected by R. L. Weber from Eva Inuma Tananta, Pahoyan. Photo: J. C. Odland.

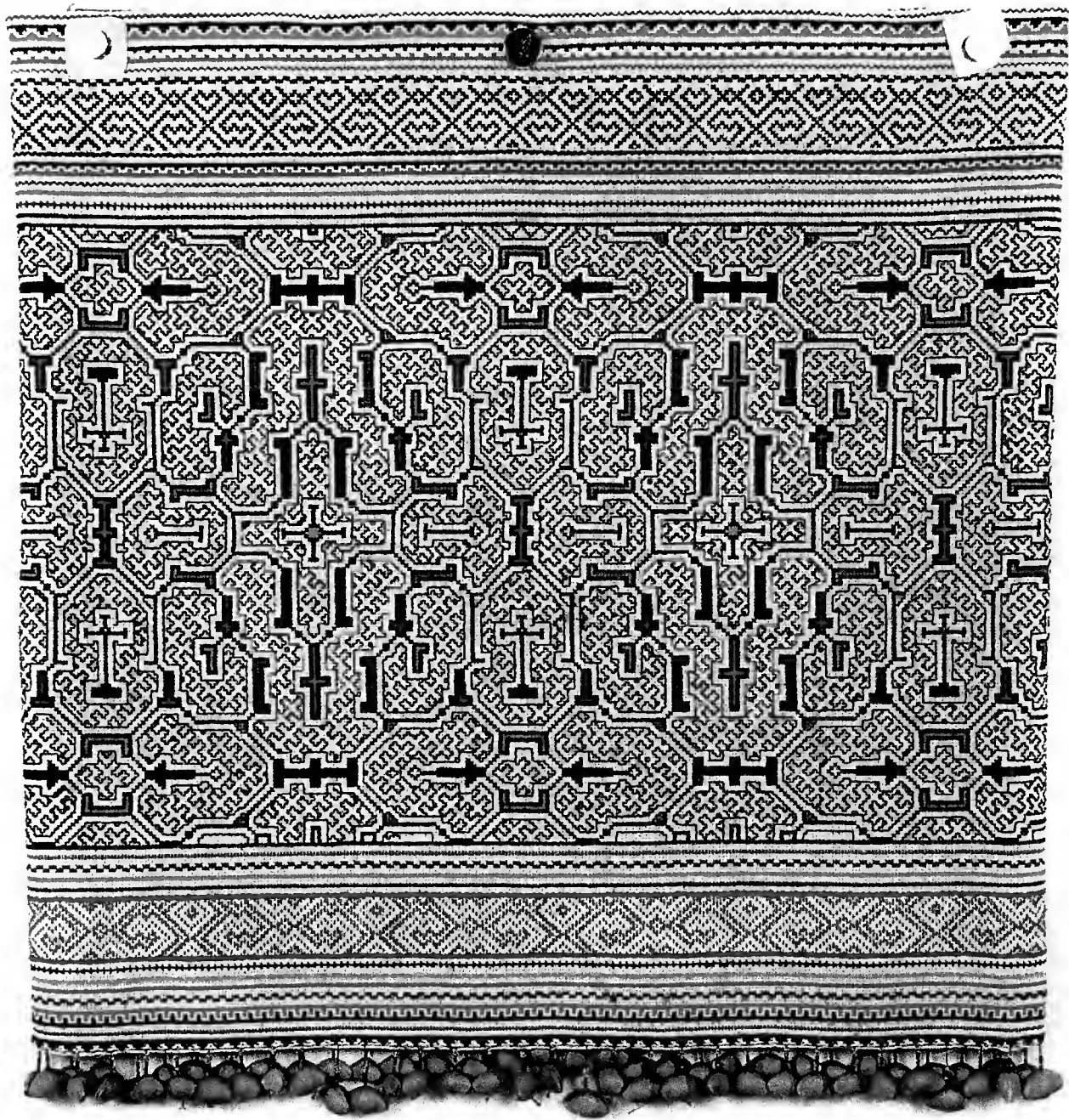


FIG. 6.11. FM338492, *chitonte*, 2001. Circumference 140×67 . *Cañamazo*, commercial cotton basket weave, hand embroidered in multicolor cotton cross-stitch and running stitch. Decorated with an attached 3-cm fringe of nuts and beads to rattle during dancing. Collected by A. Roosevelt, Nuevo Chicago. Photo: J. C. Odland.

running stitch, zigzag stitch, and cross-stitch, and the embroidery completely covers the skirt with dazzling patterns.

Women in Tschopik's film wear the same blouse style as that worn in 1995, 2007, and 2010 (Figs. 4.2, 4.16, 4.11, and 4.12).

The style is reminiscent of other modest, missionary-inspired styles, such as the Mother Hubbard of Polynesia or the Cuna blouse of the San Blas Islands of Panama, with its high, yoked collar and sleeves that seem somewhat inappropriate to tropical

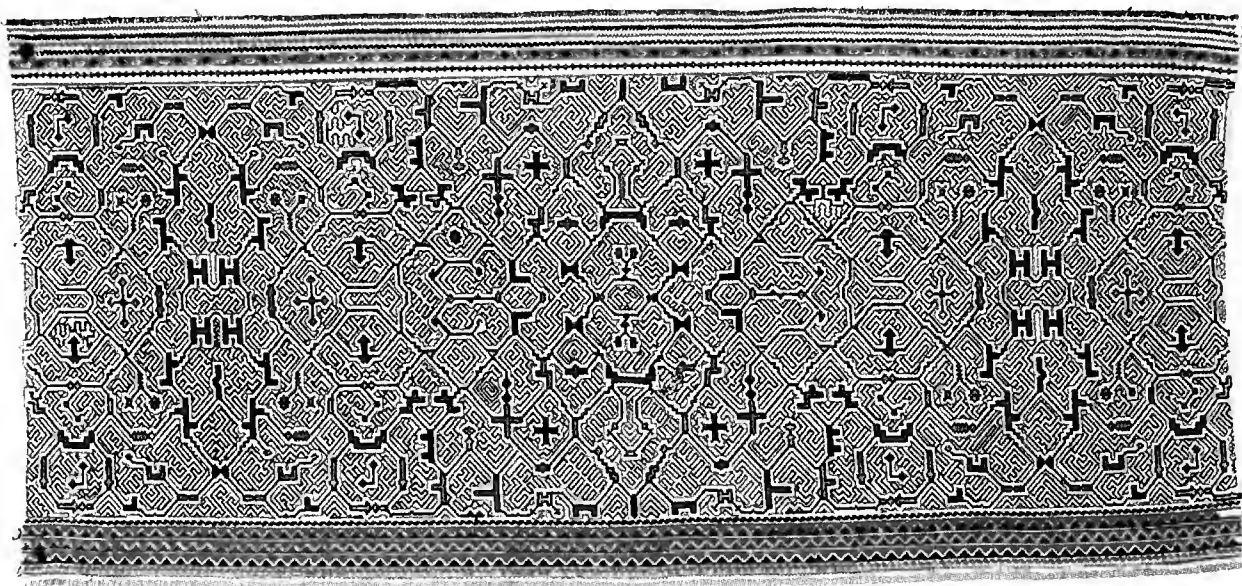


FIG. 6.12. FM341557, *chitonte*, 2007. 137×63 cm. *Cañamazo*, commercial cotton complex gauze weave, hand embroidered, with embroidery crossing various gauze weave ground threads to completely fill striped borders. Black figures with multicolor accents. Hand sewn. Collected by A. Wali and J. C. Odland from maker Daisy Valera Panchiba, Manco Capac. Photo: J. C. Odland.

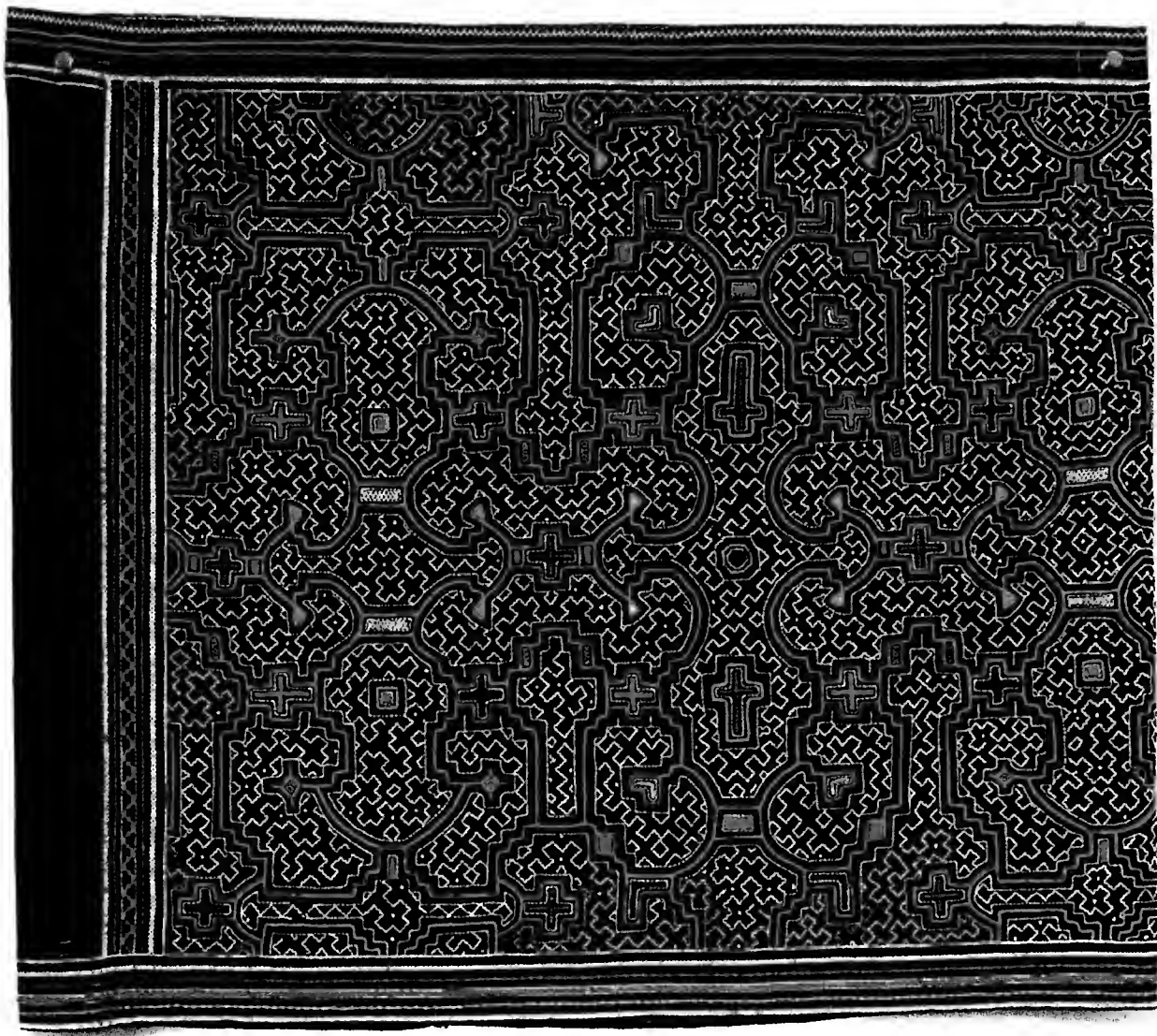


FIG. 6.13. FM342161, *chitonte*, 1989. Circumference 166 × 71. Black polyester, commercial twill fabric, hand embroidered in multicolor stripes framing a front panel of curving *kené* designs in white and gold and blue and pink crosses. Plain back. “The type is called *huiso-kené* with the designs called *maya-kené* and *coros-quené* combined into *maya-coros-quené*” (Weber, 2007). Collected by Weber in 1989 from maker Sayda Vasquez. Photo: N. Feldman and J. C. Odland.

weather. According to Alayza (2002: 18), “Missionaries obliged women to change from the *racote* (*pampanilla*), a shawl over the shoulders that left the breasts bare, to a short blouse.” In 2007, some older women in more remote communities still felt comfortable with a shoulder shawl and without a blouse. The 1953 blouse style was made of printed cotton and had a snap or tie at the neck and a loose fit to the body. In 2007 and 2010, the blouse fit more snugly on the bosom and was made of polyester satin of the brightest possible hues, trimmed for maximum

impact in opposing colors. for example, yellow with purple, red with green, and blue with orange. (For further study, refer to FM338499, not shown). Some younger women in river villages wore T-shirts with their *chitonte*, a far cheaper alternative. To the great disapproval of the older generation, young women wear Western clothes, even shorts (Odland, this volume).

In Tschopik’s film, only men wore *maiti* headdresses, woven or embroidered in *kené* or geometric patterns and decorated with feathers and carved wooden shapes (Fig. 4.9). *Maiti*

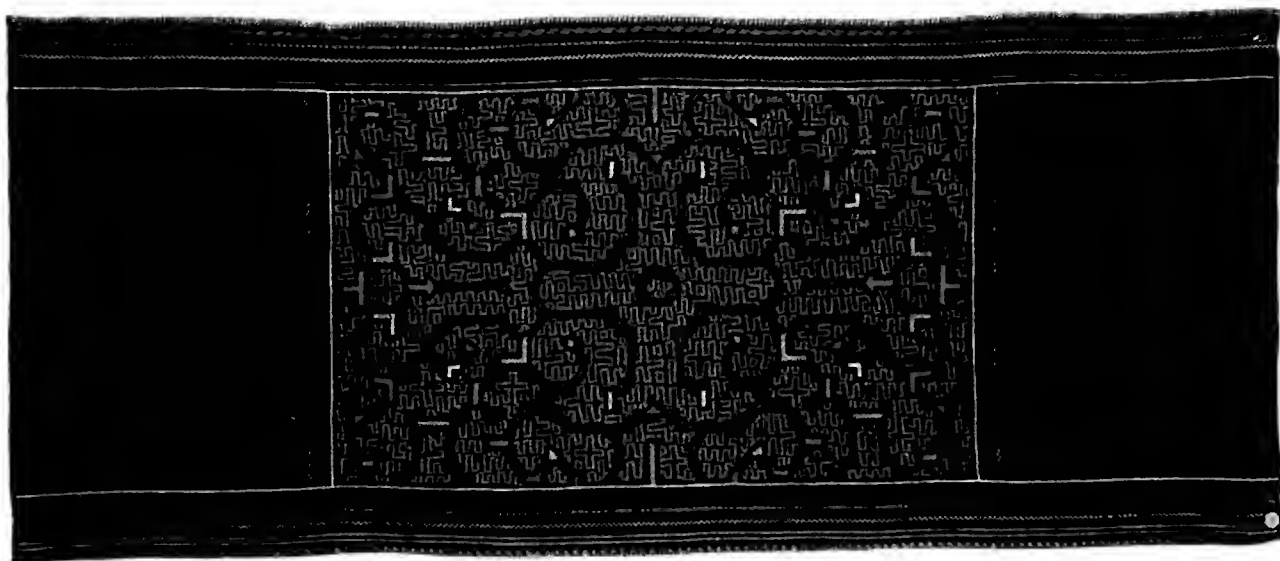


FIG. 6.14. FM341535, *chitonte*, 2007. 149 × 63 cm. White cotton commercial plain weave fabric, *tocuyo*. Hand embroidered in multicolor cotton and acrylic, machine hemmed, and embroidered over hem. Over-dyed and painted black with a combination of mahogany and mud dyes. Commercial cloth. Collected by A. Wali and J. C. Odland in 2007 from maker Edid Lenares Vega, Pucallpa. Photo: J. C. Odland.

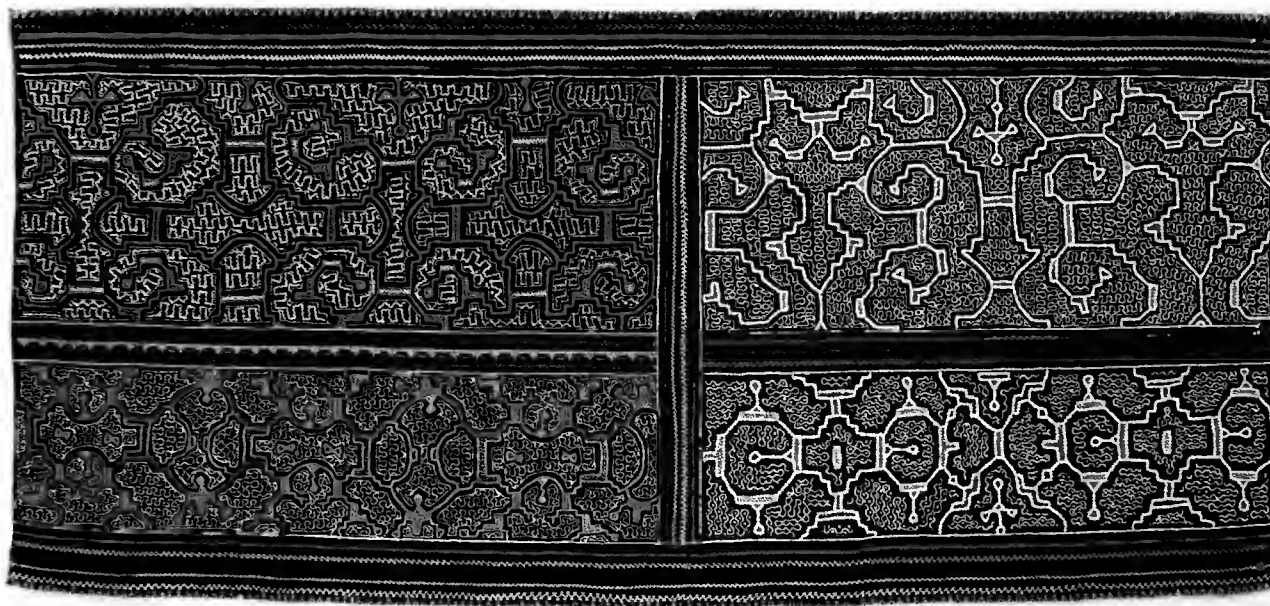


FIG. 6.15. FM341547, *chitonte*, 2007. 156×70 cm. Black polyester, commercial twill fabric embroidered in cotton and acrylic, hand sewn. Made of two pieces joined with vertical center seam. Commercial cloth. Collected by A. Wali and J. C. Odland from maker Virgilia Tanchiba Valles, Manco Capac. Photo: J. C. Odland.

headdresses in the collection do not have these trims but have a patterned headband and a hanging band at the back, embellished with seeds and tiny glass beads. Several were made for contemporary women. FM341539 (Fig. 6.16) was worn by its maker, Daisy Linares Gonzales, for a festival honoring the anniversary of her community. In *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*, a group of five men modeled their *cushmas* and similarly styled *maitis*, two with the name of their evangelical church embroidered on the forehead.

The oldest piece in the Museum was collected by Dorsey in 1892, acquired for the Chicago World's Fair Columbian Exposition of 1893 and formally accessioned in 1898. The bag FM5071 (Fig. 6.17) is finely woven of hand-spun white cotton and painted with extremely fine designs. Its exact provenience cannot be established, as it is labeled simply "Chunchos Indians, Pangoa River." *Chunchos* is a Quechua term no longer used that referred in general to any indigenous jungle people of the Peruvian Amazon, including the neighboring Ashaninka people of the Ucayali Basin. Although we cannot presume that this bag is of Shipibo-Conibo make, the similarity of style can suggest a close proximity and possible Shipibo-Conibo influence. These likenesses are seen again in FM242518 (Fig. 6.18) collected in 1962 by Malkin.

These small bags, known as *pisha*, were commonly part of men's dress and served as pockets. These are like the coca bags commonly used in highland and coastal Peru, but in the tropical forest areas, they are more frequently used to carry a pipe and tobacco or other personal items. With men's change to Western dress and regular use of tailored pants with pockets, the use of the bag has become infrequent.

Bags may be painted, woven, or embroidered; made to purpose; or cut from old garments, ranging in size from 20 to 30 cm centimeters and usually having a thin strap handle. (For an example and further study, refer to FM342131, cut from embroidered *cañamazo* with a self-handle and over-dyed after sewing, not shown). Bags are used by both Shipibo-Conibo men and women and are now an important trade item for direct sales to collectors and tourists and for production by various fair trade and nongovernmental organizations (see Wali, this volume).

Fabrication

Artists working with textiles or ceramics in 2010 wore traditional dress to distinguish themselves and help market their art. Women involved with indigenous organizations or political movements dressed to highlight the solidarity of their ethnic identity. They need not make their own garments;



FIG. 6.16. FM341539, *maiti*, 2007. Circumference 50 × 54. Threads of commercial acrylic and cotton, back-strap loomed in different multicolored warp patterns, two pieces, hand sewn, decorated with small *tiush* and *tanonanto* seeds and glass beads. Used by maker for ceremony of anniversary of the community. 22 wpc, 7 ppc. Collected by A. Wali and J. C. Odland from maker Daisy Linares Gonzales, Charasmaná. Photo: J. C. Odland



FIG. 6.17. FM5071, *pisha*, 1892. 21×18.5 cm plus 72-cm handle. Hand-spun natural white cotton with brown and black warp stripes, back-strap loomed, hand sewn. One selvedge woven, one cut and twined. Handle woven in alternate warp pattern. Painted with reddish-brown *kené* figures. Acquired in 1892 for the World's Fair Columbian Exposition of 1893. Accessioned 1898. 27 wpc, sometimes doubled, unplied; 22 ppc, single. Collected by G. Dorsey, Pangoa River. Photo: J. C. Odland.

anyone may order garments from other women more talented and skilled with textile arts. For example, a particularly beautiful skirt was not available for purchase by the Museum because it was being made to order for the wife of the community leader, who had selected the color combinations and the style of work of the expert embroiderer, Norka Linares Odicio.

The designs from the older *chitontes* feature large, comparatively simple geometric patterns known as “*canoas*” (Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a: 147). The village elder José Roque and the textile artist Hilda Amasifuén Picota agreed that these wide rectilinear motifs were typical of the Pisqui (Odland field notes, 2010). During the 1950s, there was a fashion was for these large-scaled designs of colored commercial cloth cut and appliquéd to hand-spun and back-strap-loomed ground cloth, seen on the woman on the left in Figure 4.2. The equal volume of the black and white motifs on her skirt create dramatic positive-negative contrasts compared to the more intricate *kené* figures of today, where the major *kené* motifs are created in bold cross-stitch or chain stitch embroidery with finer lines of running stitch as filler. Major *kené* designs may be outlined with running stitches (Fig. 6.19) and repeated again in even finer running stitches. Others have all-over wave-like or net-like filler lines. The splendid FM341547 (Fig. 6.15) states its major *kené* in chunky cross-stitch, outlined in fine running stitch. These motifs are superimposed on a net-like background of finer running stitches. End points of the major *kené* are reinforced and enhanced with colored accents called *vero*.

One embroidery style uses small repetitive geometric shapes to create snakeskin-like patterns that reference the importance of the anaconda to the Shipibo. When done on a simple basket-weave *cañamazo*, this type of embroidery may appear at first to be a woven-in pattern of supplementary warp or weft threads. Some embroidered designs on *cañamazo* resemble the wide twill designs that were once woven into Conibo textiles. However, on examination, the pattern threads in the skirts do not have the tension of the barely visible background cloth; they are clearly embroidery threads and not inserted during weaving. Another style combines these geometric shapes with curved *kené* forms in running stitch (Figs. 6.11 and 6.12).

In 1953, by necessity, women in remote villages produced their own cloth and made their own garments. Tschopik filmed women engaged in textile production (Fig. 4.2), beating the cotton bolls to remove the seeds, preparing the roving, twirling thread onto a spindle resting in a gourd, and weaving on back-strap looms. Elsewhere in this volume, Weber and Mujica and Morales discuss spindle whorls and their types and fabrication, important to tracing the movements of the Shipibo and the Conibo through archaeological remains.

Until the 1990s, it was common for Shipibo women to plant the native tree cotton, *Gossypium arboreum*, seen growing in Caco Macaya in 2010. Women harvested the raw cotton, wrapped it in large leaves, and stored it in the rafters of the house. To clean the cotton, it was placed on a mat and beaten with a cane so that the seeds could be picked out, then wrapped around a stick to form a cylinder. The fluffy cotton was pulled

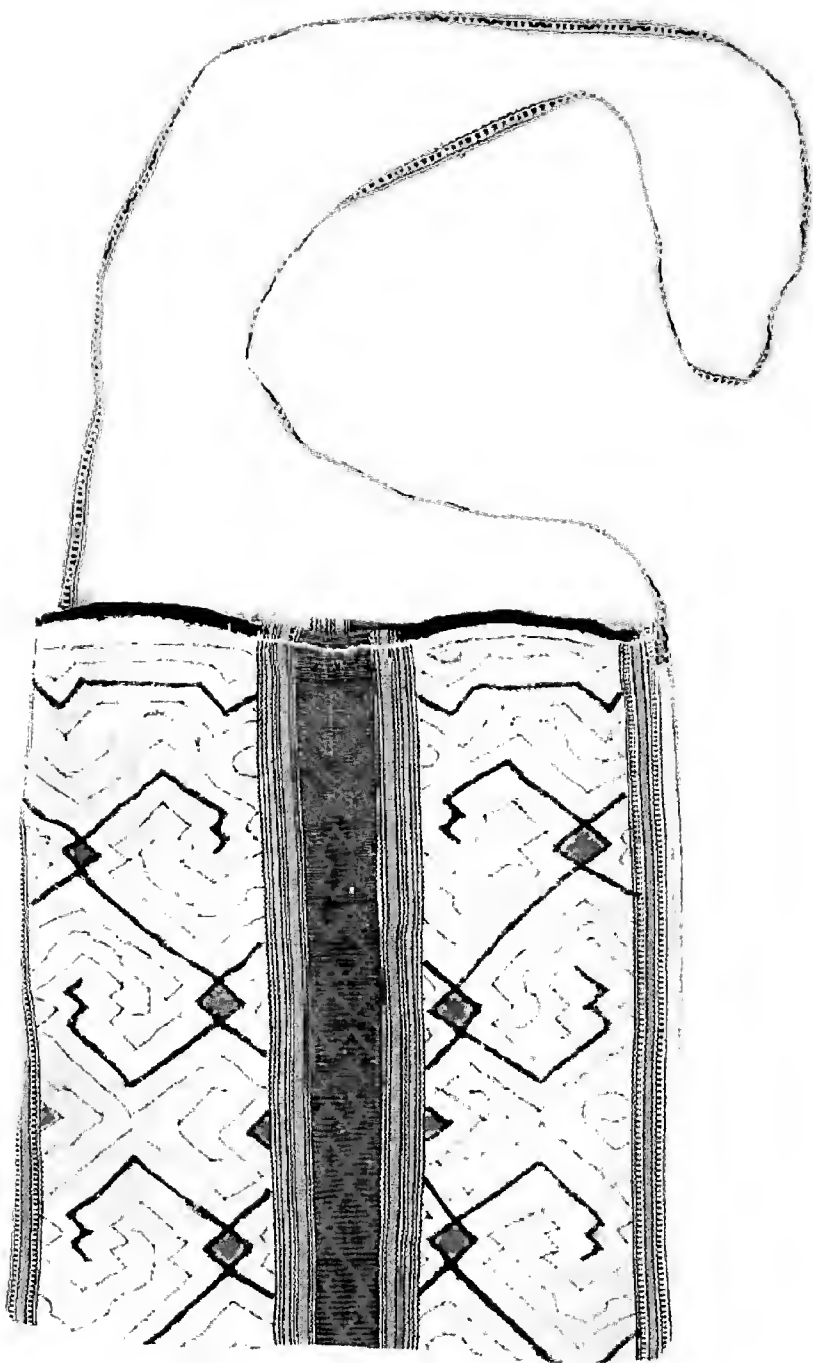


FIG. 6.18. FM242518, *pisha*, 1962. 16.5 × 18.5 cm plus 73-cm handle. Hand-spun natural white cotton with multicolor commercial cotton thread in patterned warp stripes, back-strap loomed, hand sewn. Painted with black *kené* figures and pink accents of unknown paint. 14 wpc doubled, 36 wpc singles in figured stripes; 18 ppc singles. Collected by B. Malkin from Colonia Calleria, Loreto. Photo: J. C. Odland.

from the cylinder and spun (Eakin, 1986: 17), using a hand-twirled spindle weighted with a conical or biconical spindle whorl of clay, bone, or turtle shell. Ceramic spindle whorls were frequently covered with a white slip and painted with black and red lineal designs. The spindle itself was made of a splinter of *chonta* palm and rested in the bottom of a calabash bowl that contained a small amount of white powder to aid the spin of the whorl.

Thread was usually spun with a “Z” twist and was seldom plied before weaving on a back-strap loom. Warps were continuously wound around vertical stakes placed in the ground at the desired length of the woven fabric, often as much as 6 m apart (Fig. 6.20). When the warp reached the desired width, the stakes were removed and turned horizontally for weaving (Eakin, 1986: 17). One stick was tied to a tree or to a post of the house and the other fastened to the seated weaver with a strap around her lower back. The weaver sat on a mat and inclined herself back and forth to create the tension necessary to open the web with the sword, pass the weft shuttle,

and change sheds. Single warps were most common among the Conibo, while double or triple warps were the rule with the Shipibo (Weber, 2007). The cloth was woven to let the warps dominate the face of the cloth in order to clearly show the colored warp stripes. Warp stripes separated by two to four fields of white were sometimes woven in a checker or twill pattern by allowing alternating colored warps to dominate. Stripes of twill weave, 5 to 20 cm wide, were sometimes an important design field in Conibo cloth.

The width of back-strap loomed fabric is limited by a woman’s reach, usually from 60 to 70 cm wide (Fig. 6.21). Looms in the collection, not shown, include a back-strap loom, (FM242539); a tiny loom (FM242497) for weaving narrow straps, complete with pattern sticks, heddles, sword, and shuttle; and an “Ucayali,” or harp loom (FM83005), from the upper Ucayali, made of a single piece of wood bent into a rough circle and tied, with the web stretched across it, and a plethora of fine pattern sticks and sword inserted.

Hand-spun and back-strap-loomed cotton is seen more commonly in older textiles, but there are still Shipibo women who grow their own cotton and prepare and weave their own cloth for their men’s *cushmas*, and back-strap looms were still in use in 2010. In 2007, the Museum collected a set of spinning implements from Vega Odicio of Charrasmaná, who said it would take about one week to spin enough thread for a skirt or *cushma* from the cotton she grew. (For further study, refer to the set of spindle, whorl, thread, and gourd in FM341721 and FM341722, not shown). Production of Shipibo textiles today is a home and a family industry. Women said they shared textile work with their families; the mother or mother-in-law might spin the thread and weave the cotton and give it to younger women to embroider or paint (Odland, 2007).

Local vegetable and earth pigments still supply the brown and black colors for paint, dyes, washes, and fixatives, with the recipes varying according to the individual artist. Paint for *kené* figures is made from mahogany bark obtained from local traders or by hiking into the hills several hours to take it directly from a tree. The mahogany bark is boiled in water and reduced to a brown paste that can be applied to the textile using tiny strips of bamboo as a brush (Figs. 6.22 and 6.23). These bamboo strips easily produce a straight line, with bolder lines requiring several applications to produce the line thickness and color intensity desired. Then the filler lines are drawn on (for a full description of the painting process, see Belaunde, this volume). The painted areas are then covered with a black and iron-rich mud fixative. After the cloth sets a few minutes, it is rinsed, and the brown designs become permanently black.

Brown dye may be applied to refurbish a soiled white skirt, bag, or *cushma*, painted on as a darker border, or washed on to one face of the fabric, or the garment may be fully immersed in a dye bath. After some usage, they may be dyed entirely with a mixture made from the bark *nea huitash pocóti* of the *huisopocoti* tree (Loriot et al., 1993: 330). In 2010, Orfelinda of Caco Macaya gave her recipe for the over-dye: boil a piece of mahogany bark for five to eight hours and immerse the fabric one to three times depending on the depth of the brown color desired (Odland and Feldman, 2010). Painted *kené* designs may then need to be retouched, as gradually over a number of dyeings they are lost in the dark, mahogany color. In its final stage, a garment may be covered in the bark dye and then the fixative mud, leaving the cloth almost entirely black with only



FIG. 6.19. Shipibo textile artist with her *kené* designs sketched in wax on black polyester commercial twill fabric, using cotton and acrylic threads to surround and outline the bolder designs in finer thread. The solid black areas will be filled in last with a network of even finer embroidery. Charasmaná, 2007. Photo: J. C. Odland.

the textures of embroidery and weaving still perceptible on close examination (Figs. 6.4 and 6.5). The piece may then be redecorated with appliqué or embroidery or sometimes left plain black.

To decorate new cloth, it is woven or cut to size and laid flat on the floor of the house or on a mat outdoors, and the design is planned (Figs. 6.22 and 6.23). Verena Valera Rojas, whose

name in Shipibo, Kanan Kais, means “the woman designer,” described how FM341535 (Fig. 6.14) was made, with the design begun in the center, so that “it came out equal, symmetrical, in pairs. . . . We don’t do this easily; we must think, concentrate to be able to make the design.” However, some women now used a measuring tape to achieve the perfect symmetry so highly prized (Odland, 2007). Most artists interviewed began by considering

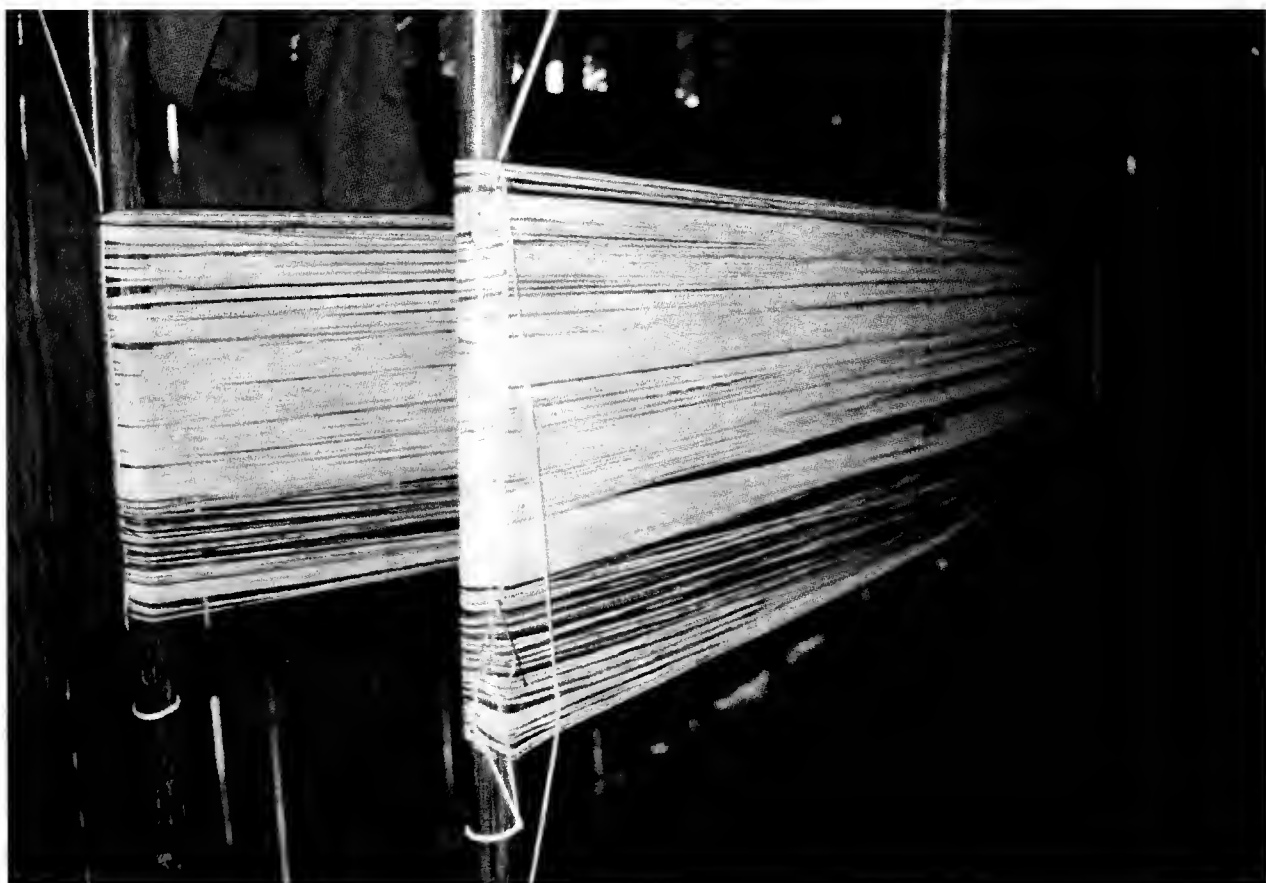


FIG. 6.20. Cotton warp being strung on a loom by Amelia Panduro Linares, Junin Pablo, Imariacocha, 1997. Photo: R. L. Weber.



FIG. 6.21. Traditional back-strap loom with the weaver Angelina Barbalez Lopez, San Francisco de Yarinacocha. Photo: R. L. Weber.

the size of the textile, evaluating the center, and beginning to plan their painted or embroidered designs either at the center or at the corners of the piece.

Shipibo women interviewed in 2007 and 2010 said what they most value themselves is the independent creativity and perfect symmetry of a work. Gebhart-Sayer (1985a: 162) noted a special Shipibo word, “*quiquin*” or “*kik'in*,” used to mean “cultural correctness,” perfectly made, clearly formed, perfectly symmetrical work. If a woman feels a lack of creativity, she may seek a treatment of the herb *piripiri* (see Belaunde and Odland,

this volume). Inspiration is always necessary, for, as the artist Maynas Romaina said firmly to the camera, “We never copy” (Odland and Feldman, 2010).

Unlike painted *kené*, embroidered *kené* is not always done freehand. In 2010, Feldman described her informant’s method: “The *kené* pattern for embroidered skirts is planned in two manners. In the first method, the artist would use a piece of wax or chalk to draw the design onto the black *gabardina* starting in one corner of the fabric. The shapes, spaces, and lines of the design are a mirrored pattern and the



FIG. 6.22. Maria Cumapa repaints a beautiful old woven cloth with the help of Maria Sinacai. The heirloom cloth was originally woven by Banila Maynas de Jacinto and painted in 1989 and belonged to her husband. 1989. Photo: R. L. Weber.



FIG. 6.23. Casimira Rengifo Barbaran applying *mano* to a piece of painted *tocuyo* in 1989. She carefully avoids putting the mordant on a small painted error and later washes the *mano* off with cool water. The cloth will finally be white with a black design. Photo: R.L. Weber

artist is able to continuously fold and re-fold the fabric to allow her handwork to mirror the original pattern. In the second method the artist starts in the center of fabric [and] expands the embroidered work from the center” (Odland & Feldman, 2010). The wax lines are largely hidden by the embroidery threads and disappear after being used or washed (Fig. 6.22).

Freehand embroidery stitches seen on garments and bags include the backstitch, simple chain stitch, running stitch, simple herringbone stitch, and a grand variety of cross-stitches, done without using hoops or frames. It is interesting to consider the number of stitches not found among the Shipibo that are common to western European culture, such as the French knot for dots, the feather stitch for leaves and feathers, the satin stitch for solid colors, or the buttonhole forms that generate circles. Whether or not these techniques are unknown, they are not used and perhaps are not considered appropriate to the traditional, linear style of *kené*.

As we have seen, Shipibo women’s traditional dress, unlike the men’s, has shown an eye for color and new materials. Designers such as Borda (Feldman, this volume) have ordered finely made and expensive garments with custom embroidery and beadwork on fabrics such as wool and cotton gauze, unfamiliar to the Shipibo. This work requires women to meet new and exacting standards of production and even to follow patterns dictated by others, anathema to the creative Shipibos in the past. It is too soon to say whether this work will inspire or affect women’s own personal dress style. In the meantime, this textile work, together with typical tourist craft production, supplies women with an income in a traditional field of work that otherwise might dwindle and decline, as the ceramic arts have lost out to plastics and aluminum pots.

Conclusion

The *Anisheati*, as detailed by Odland (this volume), once served to unite even remote communities, not only for ceremony and festival but also as a display of wealth and fashion. New clothes and new ceramic wares were required for all participants in the rites of passage, and status mandated the best display possible. However, as informants Amasifuén and Roque pointed out, previously identifiable regional styles of dress now have blurred into a more general Shipibo-Conibo identity. The huge commitment in time and money necessary to host this festival, together with the global westernization of culture, has made the festival extremely rare.

Nowadays, men may wear store-bought tailored shirts that have been decorated by their wives with traditional designs (Fig. 4.4). Shipibo clothing is commonly used as a symbol of identity by women selling arts and crafts to tourists in Pucallpa, Lima, and other Peruvian cities and is especially important for display to visiting dignitaries. Traditional textiles are still symbolic of Shipibo identity and political solidarity but are almost never worn by young people in the villages. Western-style, commercially made clothing, both new and used, is comparatively inexpensive, accessible, and common.

As both Shipibo men and women confirmed in *Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*, they continue to wear and value their traditional clothing for special occasions, celebrations, and cultural gatherings. They continue to use these textile arts to shape and preserve their identity and to provide income for their families, while women especially will continue to redefine their fashions. Their artistic traditions continue to evolve, as people are exposed to new materials, resources, markets, and methods, but we as outsiders may note with admiration the beauty of Shipibo-Conibo arts and the remarkable vibrancy of their culture.

CHAPTER 7: *KENÉ*: SHIPIBO-CONIBO DESIGN

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Abstract

Kené is the Shipibo-Conibo art of wrapping bodies and objects with designs: clothing, pots, bracelets, head bands, oars, and human bodies are all shapes likely to be wrapped with finely fit webs of designs. Drawing on a review of the literature and on personal research, this chapter investigates the tangible and intangible aspects of *kené*, the ritual knowledge associated with designs, and the techniques used for placing them on a body as well as their links to plants, shamanism, and aesthetic therapies. After analyzing design composition techniques step-by-step and demonstrating how visual effects of depth, movement, and fluorescence are generated, the final section addresses the debate as to whether *kené* might be a form of writing.

Resumen

Kené es el arte shipibo-conibo que consiste en envolver los cuerpos y los objetos con diseños: ropa, cerámica, brazaletes, coronas, remos y cuerpos humanos, todos son susceptibles de ser envueltos con redes de diseños finamente calzadas a sus formas. Basándose en una revisión de la literatura y en investigación personal, el artículo examina los aspectos materiales e inmateriales del *kené*, el conocimiento ritual asociado a los diseños y las técnicas usadas para trazarlos sobre un cuerpo, así como sus lazos con las plantas, el chamanismo y las terapias estéticas. Después de analizar las técnicas de composición paso a paso y de demostrar como los efectos visuales de profundidad, movimiento, y fluorescencia son generados, la última sección aborda el debate sobre si el *kené* pudiese ser una forma de escritura.

Kené is a Shipibo-Conibo word that means “design.” It refers to a variety of geometric patterns made by women on the surface of bodies and objects. Characterized by a *horror vacui*, the use of contrasting colors, heavy and fine brushstrokes, straight and curved lines, and filigree fillings, *kené* designs constitute webs of complex compositions. Clothing, pots, bracelets, headbands, oars, and human bodies are all shapes susceptible to being enveloped by networks of designs finely fit to their three-dimensional forms (Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a; Illius, 1994; Heath, 2002; Soria, 2004; Belaunde, 2009).

The beauty and plasticity of the designs are most visible in their union with the body in motion. For example, when painting a face, the lines preserve its proportion, following the expression of the face like a gauze finely applied to the nose, cheekbones, and chin. Similarly, painted and embroidered pieces of cloth, called *chitonte* (or *pampanilla*), are used by women to wrap their hips and thighs, adjusting to the curvature of the stomach and rear to permit walking and sitting in comfort. Thus, Shipibo-Conibo *kené* produces a type of hyperskin that embellishes and completes a three-dimensional body. Even seemingly inert objects, such as an oar or a pot, appear to have their own movements when they are covered by designs.

Design production techniques are taught by mother to daughter, using various materials. Some are derived from the forest and gardens, such as clay, natural dyes, seeds, and cotton, and others are commercially produced, such as cloth, colored thread, and glass beads. These days, objects covered with *kené*

are in great demand in the growing Amazonian tourist market, and their sale confers on the women an appreciable margin of economic independence from their husbands. The fascination that the colored geometric labyrinths provoke is considered by the Shipibo-Conibo women to be a subtle hunting weapon. They make use of the beauty of their designs to earn needed money to raise their children and actively position themselves in the ever more monetized native economy. The women usually sell their work personally, offering it to the tourists in their communities and to passersby in the city streets. They organize themselves into the flexible feminine networks characteristic of the Shipibo-Conibo matrilineal family model; they travel to the cities on their own initiative and manage their production autonomously (Valenzuela & Valera, 2005; Belaunde, 2011).

Seeing and Making *Kené*

The art of *kené*, however, is not exclusively a material and visible female art. It has an intangible existence intimately related to shamanism and plants. In order to make *kené*, women must first see *kené* in their thoughts in “*shinan*,” a concept that includes imagination and dreams. From girlhood, women spend hours daily next to their mothers and other female relatives, observing them, imitating them, and training themselves in the art of covering ceramics, clothing, and objects with designs. At night, they dream of designs and think how to bring them, step-by-step, into being. But the ability to see designs is also ritually

acquired. The ritual consists of placing a few drops of piripiri plant (*Cyperus* sp.) juice in their eyes and navel. This treatment is meant to inspire them with *kené* visions and enable them to draw *kené* with great skill: "A piripiri treatment given in the navel has this effect: as you spread out the cloth, different designs come to mind so you can reproduce them. That happens just like that, it's the piripiri that makes you imagine. . . . There is also a piripiri to put into your eyes. This is found in the flooded lands. Its leaves have designs similar to those we make, with little dots that form figures and lines. To learn to design, the piripiri is boiled and the eyes are treated with its steam" (Agustina Valera, in Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 65). Women with *kené* visions do not use physical implements to measure lines, nor do they make models or rough sketches. They simply place themselves in front of a blank piece of cloth, a ceramic, or the surface of skin and begin to shape designs, guiding themselves by the visions in their "thoughts." The finished designs are characterized by lines of various thicknesses forming a web of labyrinthine paths. For the Shipibo-Conibo, the accuracy of the lines, curves, and angles; the color composition; and the proportion of blank spaces and integration of the lines into a symmetrical visual whole, albeit with some asymmetrical elements, are the measure of the artist's mastery.

Designs can also manifest themselves in visions during shamanic sessions of ayahuasca taking, an activity that is mainly though not exclusively masculine (Colpron, 2004, 2005, 2006). The term "ayahuasca" refers to both the vine of the plant and the drink made by boiling a mixture either of ayahuasca (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) and chacruna (*Psychotria viridis*) or of ayahuasca and *cahua* (*Diplopterys cabrerana*) in water. This drink is administered by shamans, called *onaya*, during group sessions held at night. After years of apprenticeship drinking various types of ayahuasca and other plants "with power," or *rao* (Tournon, 2006: 42), shamans acquire experience communicating with hidden protective spirits, *chaiconibo* (celestial beings like the hummingbird and the ancestral *inka*), and the spirits of great shamans of the past who teach and advise them. They learn to transform themselves spiritually to "travel" through different spheres of the cosmos. When they arrive at the highest level of mastery, shamans are called *meraya*, that is, someone who transforms himself into a jaguar (Illius, 1994: 197).

Shamans see *kené* in visions and use them to spiritually cure patients. During shamanic sessions and with the shaman as guide, participants also succeed in traveling through the spiritual world and seeing *kené* (Roe, 1982; Arévalo, 1986; Morin, 1998). As Roldán Pinedo, a Shipibo-Conibo painter, explains, "Everything seen in visions is covered with designs. All have their *kené*; it is their energy, their medicine. Really pretty, really brilliant. Everything is shining" (Belaunde, 2007: 24).

Normally, male shamans do not make *kené*; they do not paint, embroider, weave designs, or place them materially on the surface of bodies or objects. They only see intangible designs and use them to cure. There exists, therefore, a gender division of labor. Women see *kené* in their "thoughts," in dreams, and in their imagination and also make *kené*: they materialize their design visions by painting them, weaving them, and embroidering them on cloth, bodies, and utensils. That is, women bring their visions to light for others to see, reflecting their *kené* visions around them and in their day-to-day life. In contrast, men see *kené* in shamanic visions but generally do not produce *kené*; they do not manifest their visions in order to be

seen by others in everyday life. This implies a clear dependence by the men on the women for aesthetic material. All traditional masculine clothing, the tunic and the headdress, and some objects used daily, such as the wooden oars carved by men, are adorned with *kené* by the women. Without a woman, a man would have no adorned material. In the past, only some men, regarded as homosexuals, used to make *kené* and carry out activities considered feminine (Roe, 1979).

Healing with *Kené*

The Shipibo-Conibo regard *rao* plants with "power" as intelligent beings par excellence. Plants' "thoughts," or *shinan*, are contained in the perfumed sap that flows through their veins, and these "thoughts" are communicated to the blood of human beings by maintaining a diet comprised of these plants. Learning, therefore, is conceived of as a transfer of thoughts between fluids, from the sap of the plant to the human blood that transports "thoughts" throughout the body (Belaunde, 2006).

Both ayahuasca and piripiri have key connections with cosmology. Ayahuasca, called *nishi*, or "rope," in Shipibo-Conibo, is a plant that allows one to see the colored energy of plants when it is ingested under the appropriate ritual conditions. Moreover, the twisted rope of the ayahuasca is explicitly identified with the cosmic anaconda *ronin*, the primordial being, "mother of ayahuasca" and "mother of water," also called *yacumama* in local Quechua. The anaconda is the aquatic source of all existing designs. The designs on her skin are considered to contain the potential for all the designs of all the plants, animals, things, spirits, and humans. Piripiri, called *waste* in Shipibo-Conibo, is also a manifestation of the anaconda *ronin* since according to mythology, this plant sprouted from her ashes.

The process of the shamanic healing during ayahuasca sessions is conceived of as painting the bodies of the patients with designs of colored, fragrant light emerging from the shaman's singing. The shaman's voice paints the designs and vice versa, the designs guide his voice. For this reason, Gebhart-Sayer (1985a: 170) calls the designs of the shamanic visions "painted songs," and Illius (1994: 66) observes that the melodies paint beautiful designs over the whole surface of the patient's body to restore him to health. The designs of sick people are distorted and must be restored to return to health.

According to Colpron (2005, 2006), shamans can see a patient's physical and spiritual state. A person who has dieted on plants has an aura of designs that is very different from that of a person who has not followed any such diet. During shamanic sessions, the *yora canóa*, the "framework of pathways" (*canóa*) that covers the "body" (*yora*), seen in visions, shows patients' bodies covered with beautiful "therapeutic designs." These designs are the lights associated with their "airs" (*wiso*), that is, their energy in a luminous, aerial, and fragrant form. A person who is physically, socially, and spiritually healthy has good, perfumed "airs" and appears wrapped in designs of colored lights that are his "aura" (*nete*). In contrast, a person who is sick, ill willed, and unwilling has no designs because he is surrounded by "bad, dark airs" (*jakonma wiso niwebo*). These bad, dark airs must be "cleansed" for the person to be able to receive beautiful therapeutic, luminescent, and fragrant designs

from the shaman: “The ayahuasca session begins when ‘the people of the plants’ connect from within his mouth to a path (*cano*) upon which the melody circulates, which permits him to sing in chorus with them. The *onanyabo* (shamans) do not present themselves as the instigators of those songs: they often compare themselves to a radio—where the machine metaphor comes from—their allies sing through their bodies. Each *rao* into which the *onaya* is initiated transmits the shamanic songs thus, by means of the *cano*” (Colpron, 2004: 295).

The designs painted by the shaman’s chant come from the *rao* power plants on which he has dieted and the spiritual beings. Each species of plant has designs attached to its particular attributes: medicinal, defensive, seductive, and so on. These *kené* belong to the “owners” or “mothers” of the *rao* plants (*rao koshibo*), considered to be very much more beautiful (*kikin metsa*) than the designs painted by the Shipibo-Conibo. Shamans can contact the “mothers” of the plants they have dieted on, feel their airs, see their designs, and sing their songs. Shamans also cure their patients by singing the designs of other spiritual beings and the pathways of the cosmos. For example, designs of powerful “clothing,” such as the skins of jaguars, fish (*ípo*), dolphins, and butterfly’s wings, appear in visions as different *kené* patterns. Renowned shaman Neten Vitá explains that in order to cure, one must contact the protector spirits who are “heavenly strips of designs (*las tiras de dibujos de mi cielo or noco naina kené*)” (Illius, 1994: 197). Transcribed below, a song by Neten Vitá illustrates how the healing process occurs by means of the intangible sketching of designs:

The powerful one has a drawing,
The powerful hummingbird has a drawing
In the tip of his beak.
He has a beautiful drawing,
That he draws in my notebook.
(Illius, 1994: 196)

The therapeutic effects of shamanic chants depend on several variables, including the aesthetic perception of acoustic phenomena, emotional perception and peak experiences, suggestive interpretations of the lyrics, extramusical parameters, and contextual projections (Brabec de Mori, 2009: 133). According to Neten Vitá’s explanation, the hummingbird’s purpose is to draw intangible designs on the bodies of patients. Its power to act on the world is concentrated on the tip of its beak, which serves as its paintbrush. The notion, as we shall see later, is of great importance in understanding the transformations effected through designs. *Shama* (or *xama*) is the “accumulated potency” that stems from the interior of beings and flows to the tip of their extremities. The tender shoots of plants and the beaks of birds concentrate the greatest transformative power (Colpron, 2004).

The Origins of *Kené* in the Mythology

According to Shipibo-Conibo mythology, people learned to make *kené* by copying the clothing of an *inka* woman. In the mythic past, ancestors of the Shipibo-Conibo smeared their bodies with black *genipapo* dye (*Genipa americana*), but they did not know about designs with geometric motifs. One day, a boy

saw an astonishingly beautiful young woman walking on the other side of the river. Fascinated, he crossed the river and chased after her, building a bridge of tree trunks to avoid burning his feet since on that riverbank there were burning sands. When he caught up with her, she lay dead. He lifted her body and carried her to his village. All the people of the village and neighboring villages came to marvel at her beauty and the designs that adorned her. A passage from this myth, transcribed by Bertrand-Rousseau (1983: 83–85), follows:

The Shipibo-Conibo arrived first, followed by the Shetebo, afterwards the Konibo, the Huaria Pano, [and] the Piro; upon arriving, they all looked; all were fascinated. The woman was dressed in various skirts.

Then, since the Shipibo-Conibo had arrived first, they took off the first skirt with much respect, the one with the drawing of a cross. Afterwards, the Conibo took off the next skirt, the one with curved drawings, the Huari Pano were left with the skirt with the drawing of leaves, the Piro with the one with drawings of broken lines. In times past, the women just painted themselves with black *genipapo*, with red *bixa*; but they didn’t know how to paint themselves with our drawings.

It is for this reason that now we know how to paint [this way]; it is because of what happened long ago.

All the things that I have said, we learned from the woman who died long ago.

They also say that she was sent by the good Inca; so they say.

Here end the ancient words.

The story says that each ethnic group that came to admire the *inka* woman’s beauty learned a design of its own. Among those mentioned there are three Panoan-speaking people—the Shipibo-Conibo, Conibo, and Huari Pano—and one from the Arawak linguistic family—the Piro (Yine). Until today, in fact, the Shipibo-Conibo consider the Yine designs beautiful like their own in spite of not belonging to the Panoan cultural group. Notably, the design granted to the Shipibo-Conibo was the cross. According to explanations by various women, the cross design is associated with the wooden cross of the *Anisheati* female puberty ritual, to which hunting animals were tied to be sacrificed by boy participants in the festival (Morin, 1998; Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 63) (see Odland, this volume). The myth, therefore, confirms the importance of the *Anisheati* festival in Shipibo-Conibo identity. But, as we shall see later, the cross is also a mediator between the living and the dead.

It is also notable that the myth narrates the journey of a young human to the celestial ground of the *inka*. She finds herself on the other bank of the river, where the burning fire of the sun reigns, in a place intolerable to common mortals. The boy manages to find a way to avoid being burned and succeeds in carrying the *inka* girl back to his side of the river, in other words, to earth. But being an *inka*, she dies so that her body can cross to the other bank of the river and enter the world of mortals, a process the opposite of the transformations that take place when a mortal dies: crossing the river that separates mortal life from the eternal life of *inka* spirits (Roe, 1982; Morin, 1998).

According to the Shipibo-Conibo, *inka* are magnificent beings, something akin to the perfect exponents of the universe. They are eternal, astonishingly beautiful, and fierce like the sun

and jaguar, and they radiate rainbow-colored lights. But they are also ambiguous figures, and thus two types of *inka* exist in the mythology: greedy *inka*, who denied sharing knowledge and power with the Shipibo-Conibo, and generous *inka*, who taught people all the technologies for living: making ceramics, painting designs, and using ayahuasca and other *rao* plants to cure diseases (Urteaga, 1991; FUCSHICO, 1998). This ambiguity is not exceptional or unique to the *inka* given that it extends to all spiritual beings in the Shipibo-Conibo cosmology, including their own *curandero* shamans, who are often suspected of practicing witchcraft and “doing harm.” The ambivalence and ambiguity of spiritual powers is inherent in Shipibo-Conibo thinking: all power can be used toward positive or negative ends. Even the powers of the primordial anaconda can be used in a positive or a negative way.

The *inka* wear splendid *kené* designs of unequalled perfection and are the manifestation par excellence of beauty in their celestial sphere. Yet the original source of the designs is not celestial but rather aquatic; they are derived from the “mother of water.” As mentioned, all of the designs emerged from the marks on the skin of *ronin*, the primordial anaconda (Illius, 1994: 199; Colpron, 2004). Gebhart-Sayer (1985a: 150) suggests, then, that generically all the *kené* designs can be considered as *ronin kené*, designs of the anaconda, although they carry different names. The same idea is found among the Cashinahua, people of the Panoan linguistic family from the Purús and Jordão rivers. As Lagrou (2007) observes, the designs of the anaconda contain the world. Each mark on her skin can open itself and reveal other designs.

In a beautiful shamanic chant, Herlinda Agustín, a renowned designer and female shaman, relates how light and all the *kené* of the universe were formed with the songs of the designs of the primordial anaconda’s skin:

In the beginning a gigantic anaconda lived in darkness,
Singing the designs of her back,
And the designs fell from her mouth to her songs.
The designs gathered together
And took form,
Creating the universe and the people.

Nevertheless, other chants of the anaconda can be used to take revenge on one’s enemies and “do harm” to others. As the shaman Neten Vitá points out, these songs are very dangerous since instead of painting beautiful designs over the patient’s body to heal them, they are used as mortal weapons that imprison and drown the person’s body with their poisoned darts, black fumes, and bad smells:

The lattice locks (him) in.
The lattice of the great boa closes.
Upon closing, it kills (him).
(Illius, 1994: 199)

Due to the inherent ambivalence of spiritual powers and the possibility of an attack by witchcraft during shamanic sessions, the participants wish to procure luminous, fragrant, and serene visions. The experience of dark, repulsive, and anguishing visions rapidly brings forth the intervention of the shaman, who tries to dissipate the negative vision and reestablish the colors and fragrances by means of songs of healing *kené* designs.

Shamans explain that plant diets are necessary in order for the generative power of the anaconda to activate shamanic sessions in a healing way:

One sees those designs when dieting on plants and their spirit teaches you, then, and one watches those designs when taking ayahuasca, one sees everything. Those designs are the air of the chacruna, of the ayahuasca; they are its air. You see designs that are the designs of the vine of the ayahuasca, and that vine is like an anaconda. The anaconda is the spirit of the ayahuasca that wishes to give us more wisdom through its air and makes us see its designs. From the anaconda, from the spirit of the vine of the ayahuasca, come all the designs since the beginning. It is from there that we and all things have come. The anaconda that is seen when you take ayahuasca is *nishi*; it is the vine of the ayahuasca. (Herlinda Agustín, pers. comm.)

Gebhart-Sayer (1987) corroborates the idea that the primordial anaconda “mother of ayahuasca” (*nishi ibo*) projects luminescent designs and fragrant air on the shaman’s eyes, and the shaman emits melodies that correspond to his luminous vision. Shipibo-Conibo women also explain that the euring rituals of the eyes and navel with *piripiri* have some similar effects as ayahuasca inasmuch as “it makes you see all kinds of visions. It gives you intelligence. Knowledge comes to your mind.” This is because *piripiri* is a plant born from the ashes of the primordial anaconda:

They say that in the old days they burned boas, the offspring of the *yacumama* (“mother of water”). Their ashes remained. From their ashes emerged, from what they burned of the *yacumama*, *piripiri* originated. That is what our grandmothers called the *piripiri* for designs. From there, *piripiri* emerged for design. . . . When we cure our eyes with *piripiri* we have dreams. We dream that we are in the middle of elegant and resplendent designs. At times, we work with the *piripiri* spirit at night. We design in our sleep. At other times, we see the *yacumamas*. This doesn’t just happen; it’s due to the *piripiri* with which we’ve cured ourselves. What makes us learn with *piripiri* isn’t something recent; we’ve had *piri piri* since ancient times. (Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 64–66)

With their aquatic origins, the women’s art of making tangible designs and the shamanic practice of healing with intangible designs are intertwined. The designer women embellish the world by visualizing and making *kené* thanks to the legacy of the anaconda who rebounded from her ashes in *piripiri*. The shaman men heal thanks to the power of the anaconda present in the ayahuasca that allows them to see, sing, and cleanse patients using intangible designs. Both practices beautify and transform people’s bodies with the ritual use of plants.

Meanings of *Kené*

The main misunderstanding when undertaking the study of *kené* is trying to interpret the geometric patterns as if they were strict figurative representations of something. There is a

figurative aspect in *kené* to the extent that the motifs are called by the names of animals and things that permit recall of their stylized outlines. These names designate designs, but they can vary from place to place and do not encompass all of their meanings. Lagrou (2007, 2011, 2012, 2013), scholar of Cashinahua *kené*, which is very similar to the Shipibo-Conibo *kené*, points out the fact that some designs may be called by the name of a bird, a body part, or a star. However, this does not mean that the figure is simply an image that reproduces the shape of such a bird or that its function is to represent it as if it were a visual code.

In order to understand the multiple meanings of the designs, it is best to be guided by the explanations given by the Shipibo-Conibo women themselves. Reshin Wesna, for example, explains to her daughter the names of the designs that adorn the *chitontes*, or *pampanilla* skirts, in the following manner:

Daughter, designs exist with different names. The names vary because we don't speak the same in the Upper, Middle and Lower Ucayali. There are "Curved Designs" that represent the leaves of trees and arched lines. The "Straight Design" represents straight trees; this is an ancient design. The "Bone Design" represents the fish bones that are piled up when we eat. The "Scorpion's Tail" is also known as an arched design and represents a scorpion with its tail raised; the "Piranha Teeth Design" are zigzag lines that adorn the border of the *pampanillas* and represent the teeth of a piranha. The "Spider Design" represents the tangle of a spider web; the "Flowers Design" is small embroideries in different colors that represent the flowers that decorate the *pampanillas*. The "Fish Tail Design" has the form of a forked stick that represents the tail of a fish. The "Cross Design" is made to remember the death of our loved ones. There is also a basket design. (Asociación Noi Rao, 2006: 93–94)

Some names designate the qualities of the lines, such as fine, curvilinear lines, called *birish mayá kené*; rectilinear (*ponté huixá*); perpendicular (*nia*); and wide, rectilinear designs, called *canóa kené* (Illius, 1994: 201). The word *canóa* refers to the frame of a house or some other type of lattice or scaffold. Other names designate body parts, such as eyes (*vero*), head (*mápo*), wings (*pechi*), and hands (*mequén*); human beings (*jóni*); or geometrical patterns, such as asps (*axtá*), crosses (*corós*), and "face to face" (*vuimana*) (Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a: 148; Morin, 1998). "*Bero* [*vero*], which means 'eye' or 'seed,' designates the small designs, which can be round, square, or triangular, and which can be found at the end of a main line. Usually, they are painted in red, yellow or blue" (Illius, 1994: 195). The lines that border the *chitonte* skirts also have names: "Star Line, Dog's Vagina Line, Cat's Claw Line, Chain Line" (Asociación Noi Rao, 2006: 94).

Women say that there are fashions, and at times, some designs are more popular than others are. In addition, they are always very curious to know about other people's designs and ready to learn them. *Kené* is a living, changing art (Illius, 1994). For example, they say that about 50 years ago, the wide, rectilinear *canóa* designs were more in style, but these days, they prefer to make fine and curvilinear *mayá* designs. One of the designs most used on the *chitonte* skirts is the *vero-yoshin*, "the

spirit of the eye" design. It consists of a series of curved lines arranged around a central cross. Currently, with the opportunities and demands of the tourist market, one of the most popular designs is the "ayahuasca heart," showing circular patterns associated with the patterns seen in a transversal cut of an ayahuasca vine. Changes are also expressed in the innovative use of color combinations and the production of new embroidered and painted items for sale, such as bags, shirts, dresses, and tablecloths made by women to attract new clients (Belaunde, 2012).

Agustina Valera, a renowned designer, tells us more about this complex polysemy. Referring to the "curved design" *mayá kené*, which in this case translates (in Spanish) to "design with curve," she reveals a wider horizon of meaning:

There are designs with curves, the fish spine design, the *metiinko* design. The design with curves is always accompanied by the cross. This is the cross that our grandfathers buried straight up in the ground when they celebrated the *Ani Sheati*; they tied a *maquisapa* or another animal to it and shot it with arrows. . . . The design with curves is because single boys and girls go around looking for everything. This is the significance of the design with curves. In the same way, our river doesn't go straight but serpentine instead; some curves are big and others smaller. That is why those that do the *mashá* sing: "the river goes making turns." We design these turns. The very small designs represent the great quantity of people who came invited to *Ani Sheati*. The adornments in the form of the eye represent our communities. (Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 63)

For Agustina, it is not simply about associating a design with a bird or animal; it is also about establishing a relationship between a design and some significant aspect of her own memories and that of her kin and ancestors. It is especially about the women's puberty festival, the *Anisheati* and the cross (see also Odland, this volume; Morales et al., this volume). The *mashá* was danced to celebrate the flow of women's blood as well as the flow of manioc beer served to the guest in great quantities. The newly fertile woman was thus associated with the flow of the river and the "mother of water," the primordial anaconda (Leclerc, 2003; Soria, 2004).

The fact that the Shipibo-Conibo word "*korós*" derives from "*cruz*," "cross" in Spanish, suggests that this design could have been learned from the Christian missionaries. But it may be only the name, not the design, that was learned from them. Studies show that the cross was a central figure not only in the *Anisheati* festival but also in funerary ceremonies and cosmology (Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a; Morin, 1998: 301). Girard and Eakin, who collected information in the middle of the 20th century, say that women "reproduce obsessively" in their handiwork a cross that, according to their informants, stands at the top of the stairway that leads to the sky or in the doorway or center of the sky (Girard, 1958: 239; Eakin et al., 1980: 63). This heavenly cross may have been associated with the constellation of the Southern Cross, used as reference for river navigation at night. But it seems that its importance was rather derived from its geometrical properties and cosmological significance as a mediator between the living and the dead. The cross was associated with the *vero yoshin*, "spirit of the

eye,” which came out of the eyes of a diseased person and rose to the heavenly dwelling place of the *inka* divinities. As mentioned, the *vero yoshin* design, made of a central cross surrounded by curved lines, is still one of the favorites embroidered on skirts. In the past, crosses were also painted on both cheeks of the dead for funerary rituals (Eakin et al., 1980: 70.)

Designs as Pathways

A key aspect of the polysemy of *kené* resides in the association of the graphics with the concept of “*cano*,” or “pathway.” The prefix “*ca*” is used to designate beings with designs such as the jaguar (*inu*), the aquatic turtle (*cabori*), the alligator (*cape*), and the pineapple (*cancan*) (Colpron, 2004). According to Shipibo-Conibo understandings, the designs reveal a geometric framework (*canóa*) of pathways through which beings move, traveling, communicating with each other, and transporting knowledge, objects, and powers. There are pathways in all areas of existence, from the macroscale to the microscale. According to Heath (1980), in the sky, the *kené* motifs are found in the pathways of the Milky Way. Illius (1994) also states that the designs on ceramics refer to the celestial vault, providing a microcosmic model of the universe.

In the landscape, designs are associated with the serpentine pathways of the rivers in the jungle. Agustina Valera expresses this idea, as we saw above. She also says, “We, ourselves, are the designs, our own river, all of our adornments” (Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 64). Thus, there is a close identification between the female body, the rivers, and their designs. Women’s bodies are also similar to painted pots, especially the large pot called *chomo*, in which manioc beer was fermented and then served during festivals, inebriating and enlivening the guests. Like a pot for brewing beer, a woman contains the fetus and makes it grow in her womb. “The large pot represents ourselves, it wears the Shipibo-Conibo woman’s *pampanilla* (skirt). Just like we embroider our *pampanilla*, we adorn the pot” (Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 62).

In the flora, designs are seen in the pathways of the stems, ribs, and veins of the leaves that transport the sap. These veins of the leaves are, in effect, called *ca*, the root of the word *cano*, or pathway. As mentioned above, the pathways that better transmit *rao* plant’s energy are the veins of the tender shoots. The miniscule designs of these leaves contain great therapeutic strength given that the *shama*, the “accumulated potency” of a being, is concentrated in the tip of the stem: “Power comes from the inside of the tree and is concentrated in its extremities. . . . Knowledge emerges from the depths of the trees and sprouts out from the shoots. These small branches are associated with the pathways (*canobo*) through which the *rao* transmit their knowledge, but also permit travel to far off regions” (Colpron, 2004: 282–289).

Finally, some designs, such as the cross, are mediators in the pathway uniting the land of the living and the realm of the dead. The cross of the *vero-yushin* design was meant to help the “spirit of the eye” of a deceased person travel up to the heavenly place of the eternal *inka*, where it was reunited with the spirits of ancient kin. Without the mediation of the design, the “spirit of the eye” could lose its way, and instead of joining the celestial beings, its postmortem destiny would be to remain on earth as a shadow, eating garbage and scaring the living with his whistles.

The journey we have made along the pathways of the meanings of *kené* enables us to see that the Shipibo-Conibo designs are much more than aesthetic objects. As recent ethnographies demonstrate for other Amazonian peoples, indigenous graphics are part of rituals aiming to cause bodily transformations and produce capable and skillful persons (for the Yine [Piro], see Gow, 2001; for the Wayampi, see Gallois, 2002; for the Wayana, see Van Velthem, 2003; for the Cashinahua, see Lagrou, 2007, 2012; and for the Ashaninka, see Beysen, 2008). Among the Shipibo-Conibo, *kené* unites aesthetics and medicine and brings together the senses in synesthesia. In *kené*, one finds sight, hearing, touch, and smell and that which is beautiful, therapeutic and correct, and tangible and intangible. This combination of senses is characteristic of the Shipibo-Conibo notion of *kikin*, which means both “correct” and “beautiful.” *Kikin* implies a visual, acoustic, and olfactory experience and includes moral values such as subtlety, appropriateness, vibrancy, and cultural suitability (Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a: 161).

The skills of seeing and making *kené* rest on the human being’s incorporation of the energy of *rao* plants, which, in turn, manifest the generative and predatory powers of the primordial anaconda. All visual, olfactory, sound, and tactile forms of the Shipibo-Conibo designs are manifestations and celebrations of the beauty of the anaconda and the eternal *inka* that shine with great splendor in the sky. “The design is what hypnotizes us with her beauty, and then converts herself into *yacumama* (‘mother of water’). The *yacumama* herself is our design,” says Agustina Valera (Valenzuela & Valera, 2005: 62). Considering that the great predator of the Amazonian jungle hunts its prey by hypnotizing, trapping, and enveloping it, we can better understand why the structure of *kené* expresses a feminine aesthetic of labyrinthine hypnotism and enclosure. The association between healing, hypnotism, seduction, fierceness, and designs has also been identified among other Amazonian people (Gow, 1999; Gallois, 2002; Van Velthem, 2003; Lagrou, 2007; Beysen, 2008). Corporeal designs generate a dynamic relationship between healing and being healed, perceiving and being perceived, desiring and being desired, and devouring and being devoured by others.

Windows on Skin: Composing Designs

This section focuses on the formal structure of *kené*. In order to understand *kené*, one must learn the way designs are produced. The process generally begins by delineating a frame, (rectangular, square, circular, or another shape) on the cloth or the surface of the ceramic or the skin on which designs will be woven, embroidered, or painted. Borrowing from an image in Western architecture, this frame is like a window that directs the vision toward a landscape of designs. However, it is a window toward the interior of the surface. That is, on drawing the frame, a horizon of visibility is opened, showing what is inside the surface of the object. The frame is like a vantage point, a point of view toward the interior of the skin (Belaunde, 2013).

Furthermore, since the frame covers only a limited area of the surface of the body or object, only part of the design composition is revealed. That is to say, the designs are not discrete units; they are networks that extend in a potentially infinite manner. Since the frame is limited, it is possible to see



FIG. 7.1. Contemporary *chomo* from the community of Caco Macaya, Bajo Ucayali. 95 cm high \times 64 cm wide. Used with permission of Martin Ccorisapra.

only what appears through the open window. If the window were larger or had a different shape, it would permit a wider or different view. According to Heath (2002a), it is about a kind of Amazonian “window to infinity,” as much for its cosmological associations as for its composition. The networks of the *kené* potentially extend to wrap the whole body. Therefore, all designs made within a frame imply their virtual totality, even though only a small piece may be visible. In other words, every piece of design made on a part of a body is a manifestation of a larger invisible web of designs.

Let us examine step-by-step the sequence of producing designs on a fresh piece of pottery. Normally, the designer woman begins covering some areas of the surface with white- or brown-colored clay. Next, using a splinter of wood, she paints different frames in black into which she is going to paint the designs that she has in her “thoughts.” Then she paints the design compositions within each frame, beginning with the thickest lines until the surface within the frame is covered. Then, making finer lines, she paints two lines that run parallel to the left and to the right of the thicker line, as if they were banks of a river that replicate the water’s course on both riverbanks. Next, making even finer lines, she fills the areas delimited by the borders with tiny designs.

To finish, she finishes the composition by painting the figures created by the intersection of lines. This step is optional, but the sequence—making the frame, drawing thicker lines, making finer lines, and filling the spaces with even finer and smaller designs—is structural. These steps can be duplicated, creating labyrinths of even more complex figures. For example, in some

cases, the thickest line can be composed internally of two lines that run parallel, delimiting an interior colored space. When painting, women generally follow these steps, but each one does things in her way, according to personal idiosyncrasies and family tradition (Belaunde, 2011).

Figures 7.1 to 7.3 show the sequence of composing *kené* on a *chomo* pot from the community of Caco Macaya that has two frames with designs painted with black on a white background. Each frame covers a complete horizontal strip around the body of the pot. The bottom of the pot is painted with reddish-brown clay. In Caco Macaya, *chomo* pots are still used to ferment the cooked manioc dough and serve manioc beer during great festivities, such as the *Anisheati*. The pots can be used only once, when they are new. After the feast, they are abandoned or sold to tourists. In the past, it is likely that similar pots were used to bury the dead.

Color and Effects of Depth and Movement

The same sequence of composition is used to embroider designs on dark cloth, with a great variety of embroidery stitches as well as techniques of reverse appliqué. The materials are bought mostly in shops in the city. Only a few dyes, such as tree barks and colored soils, come from the forest. These are used to color cloth and create the backgrounds, ranging from deep black to reddish brown or creamy white, against which the bright colors of commercial threads will shine and generate effects of



FIG. 7.2. Digital image of *chomo* in Figure 7.1 showing the two frames of different painted design compositions on the center and the neck of the pot. Illustration: L. Belaunde

fluorescence. Although the extensive use of such a variety of colors is a recent phenomenon, probably dating from the 1950s or even later, it is one of the most striking features of current *kené* compositions. Women have a surprising eye for color combination, and each new design composition has its own color scheme. Never do two apparently similar design compositions have the same colors. The effect of fluorescence generated by the contrast between the colored threads and the background cloth highlights the spatial structure of the lines, enabling the

viewer to see the landscapes of designs contained in the frames embroidered on the textile surface even better (see Fig. 7.4).

The finished design composition generates a complex visual impression, resulting from the superimposition of lines of different thicknesses. For example, in the embroidered *chitonte* of Figure 7.4, there are two embedded frames. In each frame, there is a different design composition, and the composition of the interior frame has an oblique axis. Figures 7.5 and 7.6 reconstruct the composition process of the lines with different thickness within these frames, re-creating the various layers of designs superimposed on the black and brown designs dyed in the cloth.

The finest designs on this piece are little white crosses. They give the impression of being on a background plane with the thicker embroidered lines closer to the viewer or that they are moving toward the viewer, while the other lines are farther away. The thicker lines seem to be superimposed on the finer lines, which appear to continue in the background behind them. That is, the finished composition of superimposed designs within the frame is like a landscape of designs with depth. Furthermore, the lines in the background are not completely symmetrical, and their asymmetry accentuates the sensation of movement and depth.

In Figure 7.6, the backgrounds of white crosses are oriented in the same direction, but in the embroidered *chitonte* (Fig. 7.7), these filler designs are not uniform. Many crosses are incomplete and oriented in different directions. Their asymmetry accentuates the visual effect of movement and depth generated.

The same happens in the bag FM341533 (Fig. 7.8). Different colors of thread have been used for all the lines: the thickest central line, the two parallel thinner lines, and the smaller filler designs. Solid colors have been used to fill in the areas of intersection between lines. Women explain that they use these patches of colors to lighten up and “*alegrar*,” “rejoice,” and “bring happiness” to their clothes. The smaller filler designs in blue thread reproduce a fixed pattern, but they are oriented in

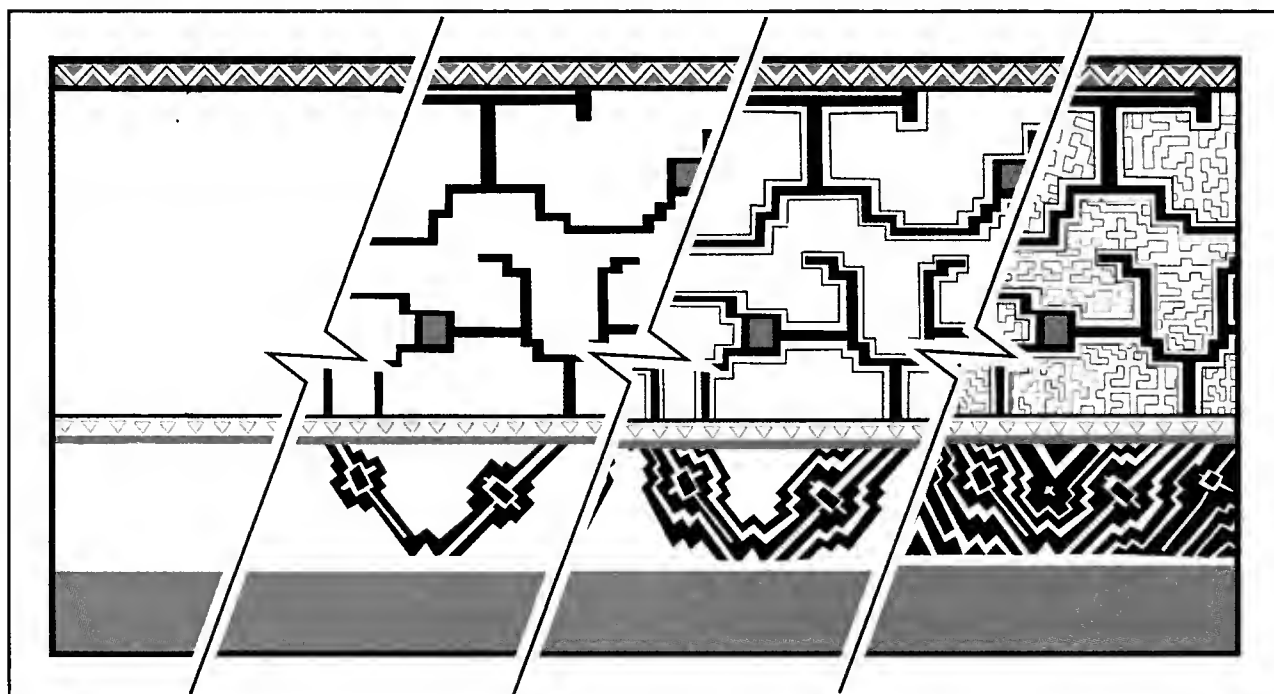


FIG. 7.3. The sequence of steps in painting design compositions on the *chomo* in Figure 7.2. The upper and lower frames have different design compositions. (A) The frames are outlined. (B) In each frame, the thickest design lines are painted in black. In the upper frame, the areas created by the meeting of the lines are colored in red. (C) In each frame, two finer lines are added to parallel the sides of the thick line. (D) Completing the two design compositions, the interior spaces between the thick lines and the thinner, parallel lines are filled with even finer designs. On most *chomos* like this, one frame covers the widest part of the middle of the pot, and another covers the high part of the neck. Anthropomorphic or effigy pots may have more frames, each with its own design composition. The face of these pots, delimited by the angles of the chin, hair, and chest, has frames with designs different from the rest of the body. Illustration: L. Belaunde

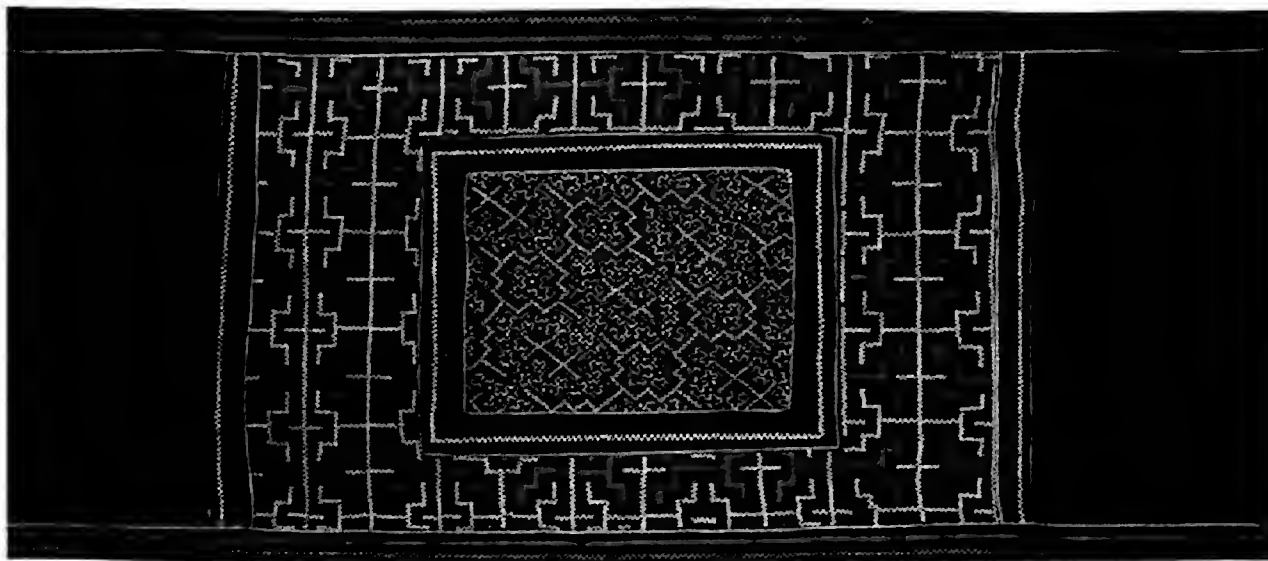


FIG. 7.4. *Chitonte* embroidered with colored thread, with several embedded frames, one frame within the other, made in the community of San Francisco de Yarinacocha. The cloth is worn wrapped around the waist and hips but is shown extended flat for the purpose of analysis. Photo: L. Belaunde

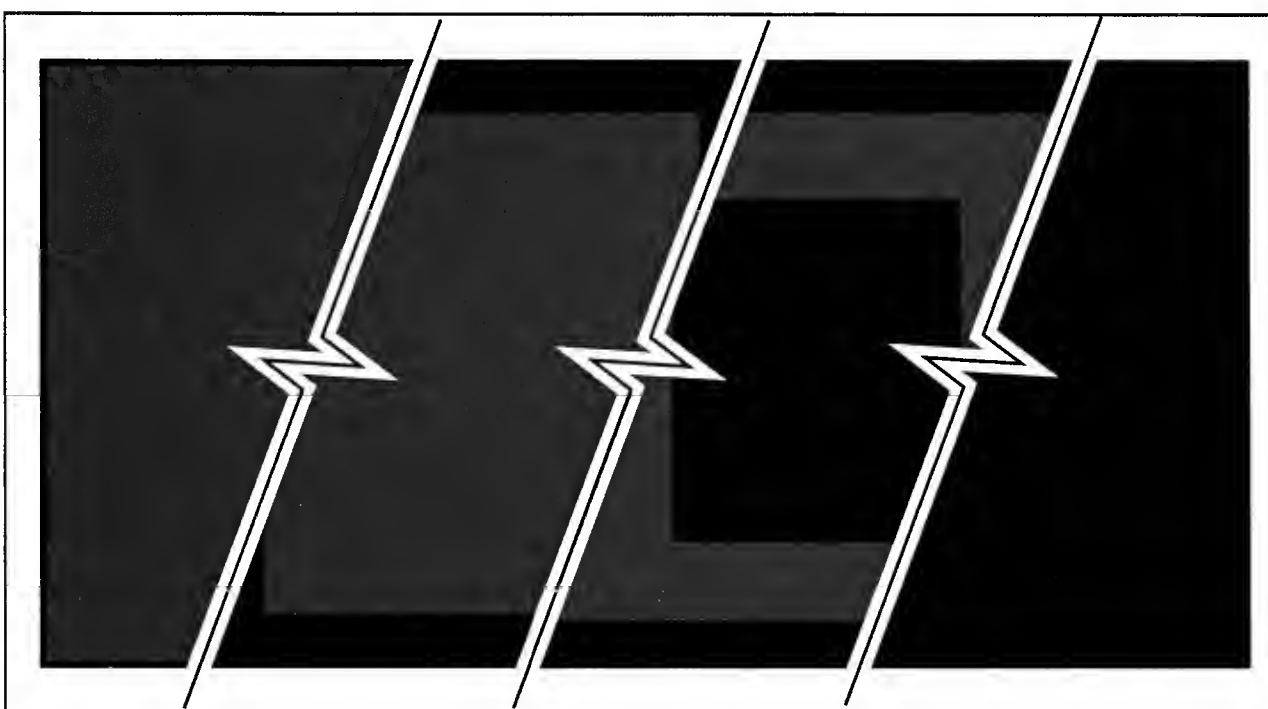


FIG. 7.5. Detail of fabrication sequence. The sequence of steps in dyeing the cloth. (A) Plain white cloth is dyed brown. (B) The first interior frame is painted. (C) The second interior frame is painted black inside the brown frame. (D) Black and brown designs painted in the second interior frame. Illustration: L. Belaunde.

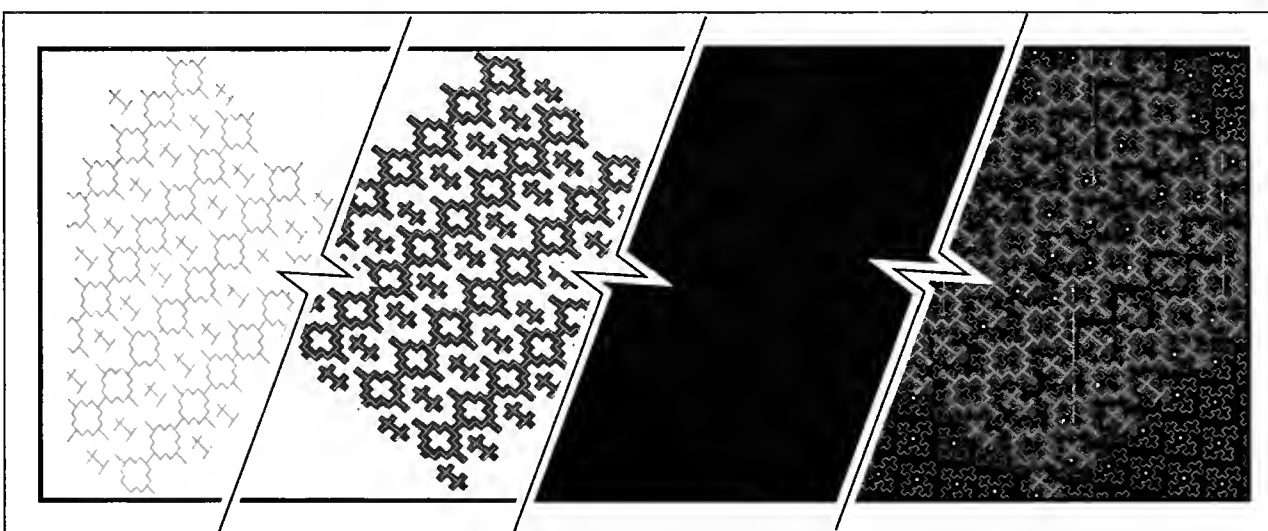


FIG. 7.6. Detail of fabrication sequence. The sequence of steps in embroidering *kené*. (A) The thickest line embroidered with yellow thread (shown on white). (B) The thickest yellow line is embroidered at the center of the brown crosses, and the two finer parallel lines are embroidered with pink thread along the borders of the brown crosses (shown on white). (C) The composition made of painted and embroidered designs on a black background. (D) The black background is then embroidered with a design of fine white crosses with a white dot on the center. This appears to be the most distant plane. Illustration: L. Belaunde.

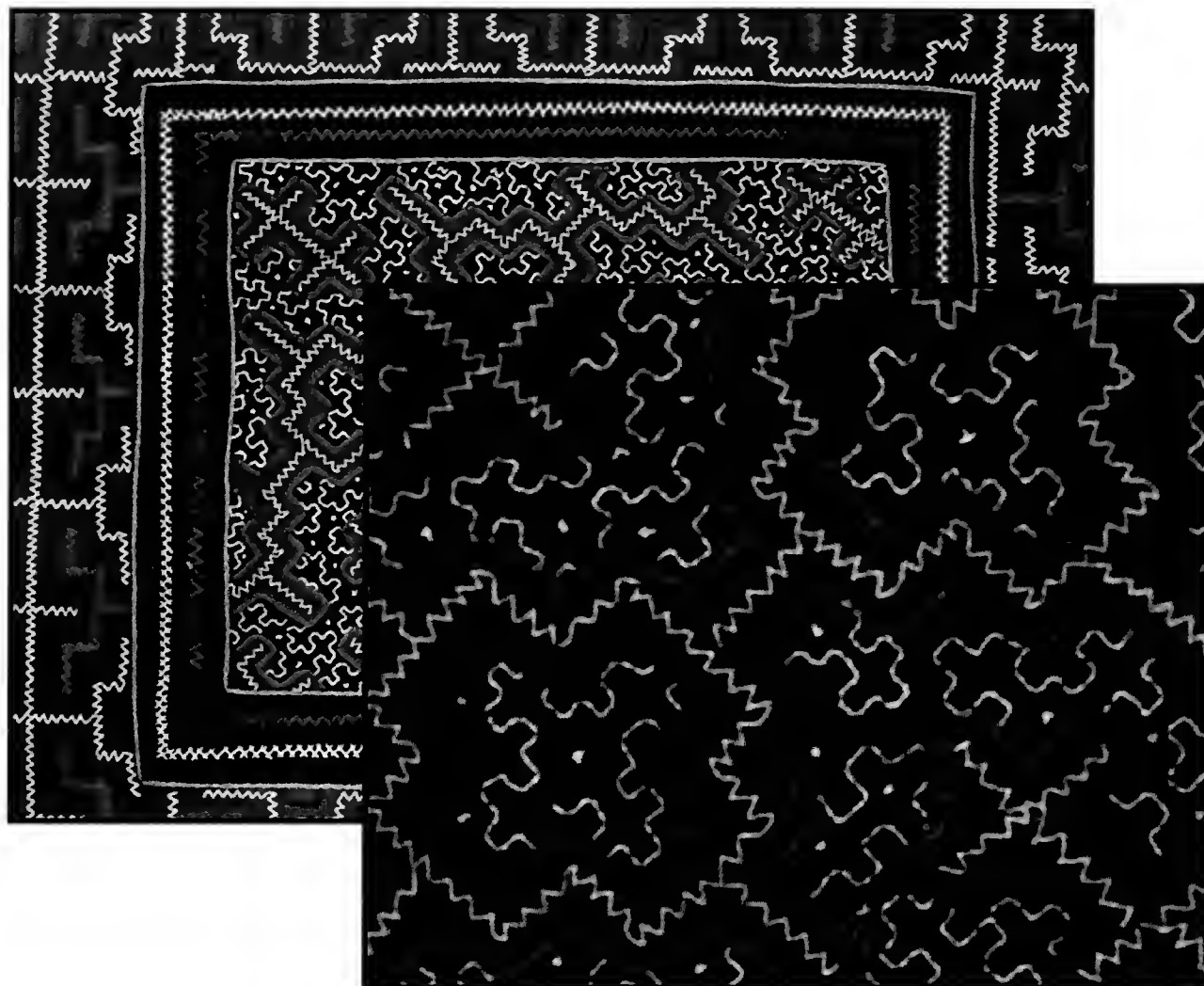


FIG. 7.7. Details of the second interior frame with both painted and embroidered designs, from Figure 7.4. Illustration: L. Belaunde.

different directions. Their asymmetry of the also heightens the sense of movement, depth, and multiple planes.

According to Lagrou (2012, 2013), the asymmetrical elements are key to Amazonian designs. In her analysis of Cashinawa designs, she argues that their *kené* is produced by culturally specific techniques of seeing. Webs of designs act as mind traps that capture the eye of the viewer. The asymmetrical features play a key role in as much as they create a breaking point, a *punctum*, where the symmetrical balance between the lines is unsettled and a sense of asymmetry is generated, capturing the viewer. Perception becomes dynamic as background and foreground alternate, and some figures are distinguished in between the lines and then vanish from perception, suggesting a constant transformation of the perceptual experience. The same argument applies to the Shipibo-Conibo *kené*. The asymmetrical elements may not be visible to most nonindigenous viewers, not trained to see the way Shipibo-Conibo women see *kené*. To an outside observer, the symmetry of design compositions is usually dominant. However, looking carefully, the asymmetrical features can be perceived, as we have shown above. Our analysis of the formal composition of *kené* also suggests that the skin is not truly a surface but rather a space. Inside the skin are found landscapes of *kené* where the gaze can penetrate with profundity. Infinity is skin deep.

Controversies on *Kené* as Writing

On returning from his trips to America in the mid-19th century, the explorer Alexander von Humboldt published a paper on annotated notebooks found by the Franciscan monk Narcissus Silbar among the Panoan-speaking people at the

mouth of the Sarayacu River. The books, made of cotton pages bound with thread and woven palm covers, contained human and animal figures and lines of symbols. According to the people, the books came from their ancestors and were about “hidden things that no foreigner should know about.” These books aroused great curiosity among the monks and other Europeans there but disappeared before anyone could understand their meanings (Gebhart-Sayer, 1985a: 153; Tournon, 2001: 85).

According to Tournon (2001: 86), it is likely that the notebooks to which von Humboldt referred contained some type of graphic made by the Panoan-speaking people, constituting not writing of their own but rather drawings imitating the forms of western letters. According to this and other authors, including DeBoer and Raymond (1987), since there is no mention of *kené* prior to the 19th century, the Shipibo-Conibo art of designs probably originated in the missionary centers of the 19th century, such as Sarayacu, where Panoan speakers were intermingled with Tupí-language speakers.

According to Gebhart-Sayer (1985a: 155) and other writers, *kené* designs existed before the arrival of the missionaries, but it is likely that Western writing and books did have an impact on them. For example, in the middle of the 20th century, it was common to use books with designs in the *Anisheati* feast. During the dancing, the shaman carried a wooden box with a book on his head and handed it to women who were beautifully dressed with all kinds of *kené* adornment (Waisbard & Waisbard, 1959: 68). It would not be surprising if the notebooks mentioned by von Humboldt were covered in *kené* and that the style of the designs could be influenced by missionary calligraphy as well as by the designs of neighboring people, such as the Cocama and the Quechua. It is likely that, in the past, the Shipibo-Conibo had an open and innovative attitude, as is still the case today.



FIG. 7.8. FM341533, bag or *pisha*, 2007. 29.5 × 32 cm, plus 104-cm handle. Black polyester commercial twill fabric with braided cotton and acrylic handle. Hand embroidered in cotton and acrylic thread. The finer filler lines repeat a constant pattern but are organized in different and asymmetrical orientations. Decorated with *tiush* seeds and tiny glass beads. Collected by Wali and Odland from maker Verónica Urías Amasifuen, Manco Capac. Photo: J. C. Odland.

These days, Shipibo-Conibo men and women spontaneously relate *kené* to writing. For example, Herlinda Agustín explained the following: “The designs of the books are like our Shipibo-Conibo designs, what we call *kené*. But our *kené* designs come from the ayahuasca” (pers. comm.). Western writing is called *nawa kené*, that is, the “design of foreigners,” an idea that is also found among other Panoan-speaking people, such as the Cashinahua (Lagrou, 2007). Like plants, books are made of leaves covered with designs. Colpron (2004) mentions that the leaves of books are, according to the Shipibo-Conibo, similar to

the leaves of the *rao*, power plants, and the written graphics similar to the ribs on leaves where the power and knowledge of plants is concentrated. This is why one can diet on books just as one can diet on plants and thus acquire the “airs” of the spirits of the books. “For example, upon tapping the pot with newspaper when ayahuasca was cooking in it, a shaman acquired the exotic knowledge of the newspapers. Since then, he possesses two auxiliary foreign spirits (*nawa jónibo*) and can travel to faraway places” (Colpron, 2004: 270).

One of the main differences between Western writing and *kené* would be, then, that while Western writing registers the words of human beings, *kené* permits registering, remembering and reliving the melodies, smells, colored lights, and energies of the spirits. As we have suggested, the significance of designs is, above all, visual and transformative; *kené* is a way of seeing and being seen, thus affecting persons and bodies graphically. Some researchers, however, take a semantic approach, analyzing the shapes and names of specific motifs and relating them to individual ideograms searching for specific encoded significance (Soria, 2004). Other researchers approach the writing and reading of designs from their musical connections.

The musical dimension of *kené* is one of its more intriguing aspects. As mentioned, designs seen in shamanic visions are intrinsically linked to shamanic chants. Chants and designs are expressions of the synesthesia of visual, auditory, and olfactory senses caused by the ingestion of ayahuasca and other plants “with power.” Under the effect of these plants, the designs are seen, sung, and smelled by the shaman and participants in the healing session. On this point, all Shipibo-Conibo shamans, designer women, and researchers seem to agree. However, some women say that the designs painted, embroidered, and woven on physical bodies may also have such musical and healing connections. For example, Gebhart-Sayer (1987) reports that song is used by women as a technique to coordinate the execution of designs, especially to paint the large *chomo*, pots used to ferment *masato* that used to measure more than 1 m in diameter by 80 cm in height (Heath, 1980:10). Illius (1994: 186) also suggests that the synesthetic perceptions produced by the plants were used as a template for the conservation of melodies of shamanic chants and, inversely, that melodies served as codification of the designs.

For example, the design *vero* (eye) that usually closes a line of strokes with a little triangle (a circle or little square) is associated with the last moments of the shamanic melodies that usually terminate with a prolonged, deep, and sonorous expiration: “[M]y informants compared the coiled tip of a design motif (often adorned with a *vero*) with dramatic finales of individual verses of the shaman’s songs, when the shaman squeezed the last breath of air from his lungs, which it is said represents the *shama* (accumulated potency) of the song” (Illius, 1994: 170). At the source of these ideas stands a family of well-known Shipibo-Conibo designer women and shamans who have worked as informants with several anthropologists. A key member of this family was Herlinda Agustín, who died in 2010 in her mid-fifties and had great renown both as a designer and as a shaman and used to conduct ayahuasca sessions herself together with her husband, Enrique Sinuiri. She spoke good Spanish and had an impressive presence and a beautiful high-pitched singing voice that combined with her husband’s to perform healing rituals. She traveled in Peru and abroad, especially the United States, providing ayahuasca sessions, and featured in documentaries, such as *Woven Songs of the Amazon*, directed by Anna Stevens (2005, Green Spider Productions), and *Esas voces que curan*, directed by Delia Ackerman (2011, Black Tartan Productions).

According to Herlinda, the designs placed on the surface of bodies and objects shared the musical qualities of the intangible designs seen in ayahuasca visions and could be sung, generating a healing effect. Each composition of *kené* had an associated chant (*bewa*). There were designs to rejoice, to fall in love, to gain insight, and many more, depending on the kind of healing

requested. Given Herlinda’s statements, one could compare the designs to a musical score. Nevertheless, this would be very general comparison because *kené* could be more a loose calligraphy or a mnemonic technique that enables inspiration to interpret a song rather than a form of explicitly codified written music. On various occasions, I saw Herlinda sing while running her finger along the musical pathways of the designs that she had embroidered or painted on pieces of cloth. As I could observe, instead of actually reading information coded in the designs, she was inspiring herself by their sight, remembering songs and entering into a state attuned to healing. According to Herlinda, only a few women knew how to chant the designs. The knowledge of the design songs was disappearing because most production of cloth, ceramics, and painted objects was meant for the tourist market.

Her statements have been placed in doubt, and the ethnographic evidence seems to demonstrate that, indeed, most women deny that the designs they paint, embroider, and weave could be sung. Nevertheless, some women who happen to practice shamanism—as Herlinda did—agree with her and also stress the links between chants and designs. The issue may therefore rest on whether women have or do not have personal experience as shamans. The controversy, however, led to a dispute about the authenticity of data collected by various researchers who worked with Herlinda and her family. Neither the excellent quality of her embroidered pieces of cloth nor the beauty of her shamanic songs has been called into question. She was criticized for disagreeing with the collective knowledge of the majority of the women, for having successfully attracted the attention of the international public, and for supposedly having induced the anthropologists to error. Certainly, this remains a topic of discussion since there are other ethnographic cases where designs placed on object are associated with shamanic chants. The study of *Yekuana* basketry by Guss (1990), for example, shows that basketry designs have songs and shamanistic powers.

In my opinion, the dispute came from translation difficulties between indigenous and Western thought (Albert, 2002). The misunderstanding stems from our tendency to interpret Herlinda’s statements as if she had the same concerns with codes and ideograms as Western scholars. The song “reading” that she gave the designs came from her experiences as a master designer and female shaman as well as from her “thoughts,” that is, her visionary ability, her relationship with the plants she had dyed, and the links she had established with patients, tourists, researchers, and filmmakers. If she used her experiences to promote herself, it would not be unusual since commercialization is part of the contemporary transformation of Shipibo-Conibo art and shamanism. The origin of the misunderstanding is ours: on the one hand, we seek confirmation of our hypothesis about the existence/nonexistence of secret writing; on the other hand, we demand authentic collective and ancestral knowledge without leaving room for women’s personal transformation and creativity.

In spite of the difference between seeing and making *kené* that is typical of the division of artistic and shamanic labor between men and women, in both cases designs have an eminently aesthetic and therapeutic purpose because, in their views, beauty is also health. Both the tangible *kené* embroidered and painted and the intangible visions of designs embellish people and things, wrapping them with colorful webs of energy drawn from powerful plants and the primordial anaconda, “mother of water.”

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION: PLACE, IDENTITY, AND MATERIAL PRODUCTION

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The chapters in this volume have provided diverse perspectives on the context, both historical and contemporary, of the collection of Shipibo material culture in the Field Museum. Individually, each chapter discusses a separate aspect of the collection, but together they speak to the ways in which Shipibo textiles and ceramics can provide insights into the life ways and beliefs of one of Peru's largest Amazonian populations. The volume demonstrates that despite considerable experiences of social change, the Shipibo have maintained the vitality of their craft traditions and associated ecological, cultural, and social practices. The fact that women continue to make ceramics and textiles and pass on the knowledge of the process of manufacture to their daughters and granddaughters is evident in the most recent collections made by Alaka Wali and Claire Odland between 2007 and 2011. These new artifacts are of equal quality and encoded with the distinctive *kené* design of the earliest exemplars in the collection, dating to 1893. Yet, as the volume demonstrates, continuity of a craft tradition does not mean that either the material culture or the knowledge systems that people rely on to produce it is static. To the contrary, the form, the meaning, the use, and the relationship of the objects to their makers have changed considerably.

This is the central tenet of the 2011 documentary film *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria* (*Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*), which uses silent-film footage taken by Harry Tschopik in the early 1950s to provoke reflection from present-day Shipibo peoples on the ways that their culture has changed and their hopes for the future. Although the Shipibo participants in the film express their nostalgia for customs no longer practiced (such as the *Anisheati* ceremony) that they see in the Tschopik documentary, they also take pride in the retention of knowledge about how to make textiles and ceramics decorated with *kené*. Although some express sadness that youth are losing interest in making these things or wearing the distinctive clothing of the Shipibo, others express confidence that the knowledge of craftsmanship will be passed along and be maintained. They also take pride in their increasing assertion of their capacity to navigate between cultures, taking on roles in national society or educating their children for urban careers. The film thus enriches our understanding of the material culture, bringing it to life by providing the direct commentaries of Shipibo people.

The film, as described in Chapter 4, was a collaborative undertaking between anthropologists, textile experts, archaeologists, art historians, videographers, and the Shipibo communities where the original Tschopik footage was shown. Collaborations of this nature are now emerging as a new

format for conducting anthropological research and disseminating it to wider publics. Collaboration affords the opportunity to allow different perspectives to inform the insights provided by ethnographic research. In the film, the voices of Shipibo men and women, young and old, are used to comment on Tschopik's archival footage and provide insights that might not have otherwise been available. At the same time, the videographers, anthropologists, and other scholars intervene through the editing process, shaping the documentary to reflect the context that was revealed by ethnographic research. The unique form of this documentary—commentary of present-day Shipibo actors on their own past cultural practices—is a novel way of documenting the change and continuity in material culture production.

The film is now supplemented by this volume, through which the authors hope to provide more depth to the contextualization contained in the film. The volume complements the film by providing even more detailed background information and scholarly analysis of the material culture than the film can provide. Anthropologists have a long history of using audiovisual media as part of ethnographic documentation. This has also been a significant component of collections building in museums. In these instances, audio recordings and photographic, film, or video images were considered supplemental or stand-alone from the ethnographic text. However, more recently, anthropologists are experimenting with combining different forms of written and visual media in a more integrated fashion to create *transmedia* platforms for ethnographic work (cf. Walley, 2015). Transmedia as an approach goes beyond using multimedia to using the different media forms to more completely provide ethnographic analysis. In the case of our project, Tschopik archival footage is a “raw” depiction of Shipibo everyday life, the 2011 documentary contains the voices of the Shipibo commenting on their own past and present identity, and this *Fieldiana* volume provides scholarly insights into the documentation process and the context in which Shipibo material culture can be understood. The three components work with each other to extend the analysis in a way that none of the formats could do alone. This novel approach to enriching the documentation of the collections will allow future scholars of the Shipibo and their material culture a historicized perspective that could afford greater comparative insights across time. It is our hope that the *Fieldiana* volume together with the documentary and Tschopik's original film footage demonstrate the ongoing vitality of Shipibo craft traditions and the cultural practices in which they are embedded.

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Appendix I. Shipibo-Conibo Objects in the Field Museum Collection 1893-2011

Accession Number	Collector	Date Received	Range of Catalog Numbers	Number of Objects	Containers:				Hunting and			Ritual and		
					Ceramics	Gourds	Baskets	Household Utensils	Tools	Warfare	Textiles	Personal Adornment	Personal Items	Figures Materials
6	Emilio Montez	1893	3410	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
22	George A. Dorsey	1893	5071, 5077	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
81	Carl Hagenbeck	1893	8426.1-3, 8430, 8432.1-2	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
1733	William M. McGovern	1927	181308-181310	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
2008	Harvey and Lucy D. Plummer	1933	167817-167829	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2771	Borys Malkin	1962	242441-242578	151	35	4	6	20	26	13	12	18	10	7
3143	Francis Brenton	1971	?	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0
3483	Robert S. and Harriet Platt	1979	?	5	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
3738	George L. and Fay-Cooper Cole	1981	284544	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4168	Alaka Wali	2004	338472-338483	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	4	2	0
4169	Christopher J. Philipp	2006	338484	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4170	Anna C. Roosevelt	2003	338485-338623	149	23	0	0	4	0	4	22	80	9	5
4240	Alaka Wali	2007	341502-341563	64	0	0	0	3	0	0	49	9	3	0
4246	Ronald Weber	2005	341401-341409	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4251	Alaka Wali	2007	341718-341748	37	28	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0
4258	Ronald Weber	2007	341061-342161	111	0	0	0	2	0	0	106	3	0	0
4265	Eugenia Fawcett and Mary Milner	2007	342019, 342021	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4335	Eugenia Fawcett and Mary Milner	2009	343772	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4344	Alaka Wali	2010	343930-343940	11	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
	FIC—unknown			2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Total objects			584	123	4	6	29	32	24	207	115	26	13
														5

Appendix II. Participants and Informants in *Shipibo: La película de nuestra memoria* (*Shipibo: The Movie of Our Memories*)

Testimony and Evaluation

Ficcia Agustín, Betsy Adelita Agustín Sánchez, Celestina Amasifuén, Hilda Amasifuén Picota, William Barbarán González, Petronila Cauper, Martin Ccorisapra, Manuel Dámaso Cuentas Robles, Inesa Diaz, José Flores Ríos, Haroldo Inuma Macedo, Francisca Panchita Linares, Viviano Linares, Priscila Maynas Romaina, Juan Ochavano, Igor Ochavano Rucoba, Elmer Reátegui Cauper, Delia Rengifo Cauper, Joidy Rodríguez Luz, Josmel Roque Agustín, Ronaldo Roque Agustín, José Roque Maynas, Jakelyn Juana Roque Valles, Nocona Roque, Saúl Rojas, Orfelinda Sanancino Cauper, Roberto Silvano Rengifo, Eli Sánchez Rodríguez, Cledy Rosi Flores Vásquez, Sara Ruth Urías Román, Nilda Valera Cumapa, Lucas Angelo Valera Rodríguez, Ervín Valera Flores, and Bernabé Ventura, and Rocío del Pilar Yui Inuma.

The Native Communities of Peru

Caco Macaya, Curiaca del Caco, La Cumbre, Manco Cápac, Pueblo Nuevo, San Francisco de Yarinacocha, San Luís de Charasmaná, Santa Clara (Nuevo Chicago), Santa Rosa, and Yarina.

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